TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1928

Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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THE BREADTH OF MY LOVE. 1 Cor. 13, 13

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TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1928

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

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Aug. 30. John 5.30-38. The Greater Witness.
Aug. 31. John 5.39-47. The Scriptures Testify of Christ.
Sept. 1. 1 Thess. 2.1-16. Witnessing for God.
Sept. 2. Psalm 119.9-16. God's Law in the Heart.

XI. Sept. 3. Acts 17.16-21. Paul in Athens.
Sept. 4. Acts 17.22-32. Natural and Revealed Religion.
Sept. 5. Acts 18.1-11. Paul at Corinth.
Sept. 6. Isaiah 44.9-20. The Folly of Idolatry.
Sept. 7. 1 Cor. 2.1-16. The Spirit and Message of Paul.
Sept. 8. Heb. 1.1-9. God Revealed in Christ.
Sept. 9. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. Never-failing Love.

XII. Sept. 10. 1 Cor. 1.10-17. Party Spirit Destructive.
Sept. 11. 1 Cor. 3.5-23. Christian Cooperation.
Sept. 12. 1 Cor. 9.16-27. For the Gospel's Sake.
Sept. 13. 1 Cor. 12.12-31. The Church an Organism.
Sept. 14. Romans 13.1-10. Social Obligation.
Sept. 15. Philemon 4-20. An Example of Brotherhood.
Sept. 16. Ephesians 4.1-6. Maintaining Christian Unity.

XIII. Sept. 17. 1 Cor. 8.1-13. Denying One's Self for Others.
Sept. 18. Gal. 6.1-10. Bearing Another's Burdens.
Sept. 19. Mt. 18.1-14. Christ the Champion of the Weak.
Sept. 20. Gal. 5.13-26. Leadership and Fruit of the Spirit.
Sept. 21. Mt. 25.34-46. A Social Gospel.
Sept. 22. 1 John 2.7-11. Brotherly Love.
Sept. 23. Rom. 14.13-21. Christian Self-denial.

XIV. Sept. 24. Gal. 1.6-17. Paul's Divine Authority.
Sept. 25. Acts 26.15-23. Witnessing for Christ.
Sept. 26. Rom. 12.1-8. The Spirit and Form of Service.
Sept. 27. Gal. 5.1-15. Religious Freedom.
Sept. 28. Rom. 10.1-15. Why Send Missionaries?
Sept. 29. Heb. 1.1-9. God Revealed in Christ.
Sept. 30. Phil. 4.4-20. Rejoice and Pray.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Oct. 1. Acts 18-24-28. Apollos in Ephesus.
Oct. 2. Acts 19.1-10. Paul's Work in Ephesus.
Oct. 3. Acts 19.11-20. Impostors Rebuked.
Oct. 4. Acts 19.23-32. The Riot at Ephesus.
Oct. 5. Eph. 2.1-10. Christian Experience.
Oct. 6. Acts 20.17-38. Paul's Farewell to the Ephesians.
Oct. 7. Eph. 3.14-21. Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians.

II. Oct. 8. 1 Cor. 12.1-11. A Diversity of Gifts.
Oct. 9. Acts 5.12-16. The Gift of Healing.
Oct. 10. 1 Cor. 14.1-9. The Gift of Prophecy.
Oct. 11. Prov. 3.13-23. The Gift of Wisdom.
Oct. 12. Heb. 11.32-40. The Gift of Faith.
Oct. 13. 1 Cor. 13.1-13. The Best Gift.
Oct. 14. 1 John 4.7-16. The Test of a Christian.

III. Oct. 15. 2 Cor. 8.1-9. Macedonian Liberality.
Oct. 16. 2 Chron. 31.4-12a. The Jewish Standard.
Oct. 17. Malachi 3.7-15. Robbing God.
Oct. 18. 1 Cor. 16.1-9. The Christian Standard.
Oct. 19. Mt. 6.1-7. Humility in Giving.
Oct. 20. 2 Cor 9.6-15. Encouragement to Giving.
Oct. 21. Psalm 95.1-11. Praise to the Creator.

IV. Oct. 22. Acts 20.1-12. Paul Leaving Europe.

	Oct.	23.	Acts 20.13-25. The Stop at Miletus.
	Oct.	24.	Acts 20.26-38. Exhortation to the Ephesians.
	Oct.	25.	Acts 21.1-5. From Miletus to Tyre.
	Oct.	26.	Acts 21.6-14. From Tyre to Cæsarea.
	Oct.	27.	Acts 21.15-26. Arriving in Jerusalem.
	Oct.	28.	John 10.7-17. The Good Shepherd.
V.	Oct.	29.	Rom. 13.1-7. Divine Sanction of Law.
	Oct.	30.	Rom. 13.8-14. The Law of Love.
	Oct.	31.	Exod. 20.1-17. Some Prohibitions.
	Nov.	1.	Dt. 28.1-10. Rewards of National Righteousness.
	Nov.	2.	Prov. 23.29-35. The Woes of Drunkenness.
	Nov.	3.	Rom. 14.13-23. Abstinence for the Sake of Others.
	Nov.	4.	Psalm 15. God's Ideal Man.
VI.	Nov.	5.	Rom. 12.1-8. Oneness in Christ.
	Nov.	6.	Rom. 12.9-21. Christian Brotherliness.
	Nov.	7.	Gen. 26.23-33. Isaac the Peacemaker.
	Nov.	8.	Gen. 45.1-11. An Example of Forgiveness.
	Nov.	9.	Mt. 5.21-26. Reconciliation between Brothers.
	Nov.	10.	Micah 4.1-8 Universal Peace.
	Nov.	11.	Phil. 2.5-11. The Mind of the Master.
VII.	Nov.	12.	Acts 21.17-26. Disarming Prejudice.
	Nov.	13.	Acts 21.27-36. Mob Violence.
	Nov.	14.	Acts 22.3-16. Paul Tells of his Conversion.
	Nov.	15.	Acts 23.12-22. Conspiracy against Paul.
	Nov.	16.	Acts 23.23-35. Leaving Jerusalem.
	Nov.	17.	2 Thess. 1.1-12. Comfort in Persecution.
	Nov.	18.	Eph. 6.10-20. The Christian's Armor.
VIII.	Nov.	19.	Eph. 3.14-21. A Prayer for the Ephesians.
	Nov.	20.	Col. 1.9-18. A Prayer for the Colossians.
	Nov.	21.	1 Tim. 2.1-8. Paul's Exhortation to Prayer.
	Nov.	22.	Mt. 15.21-28. Praying in Faith.
	Nov.	23.	Luke 18.1-12. The Prayer of the Publican.
	Nov.	24.	John 17.9-20. Christ's Intercessory Prayer.
	Nov.	25.	Psalm 34.1-8. Jehovah the Deliverer.
IX.	Nov.	26.	Acts 24.10-21. Paul before Felix.
	Nov.	27.	Acts 25.1-12. Paul before Festus.
	Nov.	28.	Acts 26.19-29. Paul before Agrippa.
	Nov.	29.	Phil. 4.1-7. The Spirit of Thanksgiving.
	Nov.	30.	2 Tim. 2.1-13. Enduring Hardships.
	Dec.	1.	Phil. 1.12-22. Triumphing over Bonds.
	Dec.	2.	Psalm 25.1-6. A Prayer for Guidance.
X.	Dec.	3.	Acts 27.14-26. A Stormy Voyage.
	Dec.	4.	Acts 27.33-44. A Providential Deliverance.
	Dec.	5.	Acts 28.1-10. A Winter in Melita.
	Dec.	6.	Acts 28.11-22. The Arrival in Rome.
	Dec.	7.	Rom. 1.8-17. Paul's Interest in the Romans.
	Dec.	8.	Phil. 1.1-11. A Letter from Prison.
	Dec.	9.	Psalm 91.9-16. God's Care for his Own.
XI.	Dec.	10.	Phil. 2.19-30. Timothy and Epaphras.
	Dec.	11.	Philemon 8-20. Philemon and Onesimus.
	Dec.	12.	Acts 20.32-38. The Ephesian Elders.
	Dec.	13.	Phil. 4.1-4. The Philippians.
	Dec.	14.	Rom. 16.1-10. Priscilla, Aquila and Others.
	Dec.	15.	Col. 4.7-18. Paul's Co-workers.
	Dec.	16.	Psalm 63.1-11. Thirsting for God.
XII.	Dec.	17.	Acts 20.18-27. Paul's Faithful Ministry.
	Dec.	18.	2 Tim. 4.1-5. Final Charge to Timothy.
	Dec.	19.	2 Tim. 4.6-18. Facing Martyrdom.
	Dec.	20.	2 Cor. 5.1-10. Willingness to Depart.
	Dec.	21.	1 Cor. 15.50-57. The Resurrection.
	Dec.	22.	John 14.1-11. The Heavenly Home.
	Dec.	23.	Psalm 98.1-9. Praise to Jehovah.
XIII.	Dec.	17.	Isaiah 9.1-7. The Coming of Jesus Prophesied.
	Dec.	18.	Luke 2.8-20. Angels Announce the Birth of Jesus.
	Dec.	19.	Luke 2.25-35. Simeon's Adoration.
	Dec.	20.	Mt. 2.1-12. The Visit of the Magi.
	Dec.	21.	Mt. 2.13-18. Jesus Escapes from Death.
	Dec.	22.	Luke 2.41-52. The Boy Jesus.
	Dec.	23.	Isaiah 11.1-9. The Character of Christ's Reign.
XIV.	Dec.	24.	Acts 18.24-28. Paul in Ephesus.
	Dec.	25.	Acts 20.1-12. Paul's Last Journey to Jerusalem.
	Dec.	26.	Luke 2.1-20. The Birth of Jesus.
	Dec.	27.	Romans 1.8-17. Paul's Interest in the Romans.
	Dec.	28.	Acts 26.19-29. Paul before Agrippa.
	Dec.	29.	Philemon 1-25. Paul and his Friends.
	Dec.	30.	Psalm 103.1-13. Jehovah's Mercy.

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1928

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

How Our Church-Schools Began

On the beautiful Victoria Embankment in London there stands a statue of a man holding in his hand an open Bible. The statue is there to honor one of the great men of England, Robert Raikes, the man who believed in young people and in their need of a knowledge of the Bible. When this statue was unveiled, Mr. John Wanamaker made an address in which he said that if the figure of Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday-schools, were made of pure gold and stood as high as Big Ben on the top of the Houses of Parliament, it would not represent the value of the great movement to the national life of England.

Lydal said when he translated the Bible into English that he wanted every plow-boy in England to have access to it; Raikes started the first Sunday-schools with a similar aim in view. In his day the children of the poor led very hard lives, and he was appalled at their condition. It is the suggestion of John Howard that Robert Raikes' well-known interest also in the condition of prisoners may have led him to establish Sunday-schools in order to keep the children of the slums from becoming criminals. Raikes believed that vice is preventable, and he called the schools which he started in Gloucester in 1780, the first one in Sooty Alley, "a new experiment in botanizing in human nature."

Out of this movement to provide religious instruction for the poor and neglected children of Gloucester have grown the modern Church-schools for the poor and the rich, the young and the old, throughout the world.

While here and there some form of instruction was given to children on Sunday before the schools of Raikes, and while William Fox and others are credited with great assistance in the undertaking, it was Robert Raikes who not only established schools but advocated the Sunday-school system and brought about its general adoption. By means of a series of articles in the Gloucester Journal, of which he was editor and proprietor, Raikes urged the formation of Sunday-schools throughout the country, and other editors took up the project. It has been said of Raikes that he "raised Sunday teaching from a fortuitous rarity into a universal system. He found the practise local; he made it national."

The children in the Gloucester Sunday-schools were expected to attend school from ten to twelve, and return at one to remain till five. At one o'clock there was a lesson, then church followed, and after church portions of the catechism were recited. There is a Bible carefully preserved in England in which its owner, a sailor lad, wrote: "This Bible was presented to me by Mr. Raikes, in the city of Herford, in February, 1781, as a reward for my regular attendance at the Sunday-school there, and for my good behavior during that time."

When Sunday-schools were begun, few children of the poor could read, and part of the teacher's task was to teach reading—also writing and spelling—but this gradually became unnecessary as the common schools progressed. Most teachers were paid a small amount. It was some forty years after the founding of the system that teachers generally gave their services free.

While the Sunday-school movement spread rapidly, it was in spite of the churches. Church authorities declared Sunday-schools to be "dangerous, demoralizing, and managed by agents of the devil." The use of churches for such schools was declared to be "a desecration of both the church and the Lord's Day," and schools were therefore held in private houses. The Archbishop of Canterbury called a meeting of bishops and clergy to see what should be done to stop them. It is said that William Pitt seriously considered the introduction of a bill in Parliament for their suppression.

Yet the Sunday-schools were not without influential friends. One writer of Raikes' time said of them: "No plan has promised to effect a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the apostles." John Wesley wrote about the movement: "Perhaps God may have a deeper end thereto than men are aware of. Who knows but what some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians."

Teaching was often strenuous work in those early Sunday-schools of England. In one school about 1828 the secretary had an iron cage in which to put refractory lads, which was then pulled up to the ceiling. The records tell us that when a defiant lad convulsed the school by crowing like a cock from his high loft, the practise was given up. A few years later this same school bought rope "to tie up those boys who refused to stand upon the form when they behaved ill."

Unpunctual teachers were a problem then as now, for there was a rule that if a teacher was absent when the roll was called he should pay a fine of one penny, and that the superintendent pay the fines himself if he could not collect them from the teachers.

The financial support of the schools was a great difficulty. There is a record of a secretary being directed to purchase an encyclopedia "if he can buy one second-hand with his own money."

The Sunday-school "treats" were given in summer time, and a ruling was made "that no children be received into school after March fifteenth, lest they come only for the cakes."

The World's Sunday School Association

We belong to a great company of three and a half million Sunday-school officers and teachers, men and women of all races, languages and color, who today are engaged in the great work of religious education.

The World's Sunday School Association is a federation of the National and International Sunday-school Unions or Associations or Councils of Algeria, Australia, Burma, Chile, Denmark, England and Wales, Germany, Holland, New Zealand, North America, Portugal, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and Sweden.

This Association employs Field Secretaries for Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Ceylon, China, Czecho-Slovakia, Esthonia, France, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Moslem Lands, Norway, Philippine Islands, Poland, Roumania, Syria, and Palestine. Reports from these Secretaries show surprising results. A school in Pyengyang has an attendance of three thousand. The schools of Seoul, Korea, have more members than all the schools in Manhattan, Queens and Richmond, New York, which have a combined population of over three millions. The schools of Brazil have trebled in the last decade.

Once in four years a great world gathering of Sunday-school workers is held. At the last Convention, which was held in Glasgow, fifty-five nations and forty-two denominations were represented. During the week of July 11-18 of this year, the Tenth Convention will be held in Los Angeles, California. Why not attend and get a vision of this great force for extending the Kingdom of God, and become imbued with the desire and the intention of helping our home fields to live up to the example set by the foreign fields? For information in regard to the Convention, write to The World's Sunday School Association, 216 Metropolitan Tower, 1 Madison Ave., New York City.

When the Uniform Series of International Sunday School Lessons Began

The earliest Sunday-school lessons were in the form of catechisms, questions and answers, by which the children were drilled in the doctrines, or theology, of the various churches. Then the lesson material was broadened. Lesson books were prepared whereby, still by means of printed questions and answers, facts about the Old and New Testament history were to be memorized. "Selected Lessons" were

issued early in the second decade of the nineteenth century by the American Sunday School Union.

When Dr. J. H. Vincent (afterwards Bishop Vincent) prepared a course of lessons on "The Life of Christ" it pointed the way to the International Uniform Lessons. In 1871 publishers in New York decided to issue uniform lessons the following year. At the Convention of the International Sunday-School Association held at Indianapolis in 1872 a committee was appointed to arrange a course covering the Bible for a seven year cycle of lessons. It was Mr. B. F. Jacobs who brought about the speedy adoption of these uniform lessons by churches of the various denominations.

Dr. Benjamin Winchester, writing in "The Church School," lists the following results accomplished through their use:

1. An increased, widespread and permanent interest in Bible study.
2. The development of a more fraternal spirit among the different denominations of evangelical Christians.
3. An increased interest in the exposition of Scripture and a lessened emphasis upon dogma and creed.
4. The unifying of the scattered forces of Christendom and the focusing of attention upon the work of religious instruction.
5. The quickening of religious sentiment and sympathy, through the simultaneous study of the same passage of Scripture.
6. The facilitating of the preparation of religious literature, in the form of exposition and comment upon current Sunday-school lessons.

When the Improved Uniform Series of International Sunday School Lessons Began

It was in 1918 that topics adapted to the Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior, and Young People and Adult groups were issued, all based upon a common lesson title and Scripture passage, and since then the series has been called the Improved Uniform Series. Since 1924, when the Group Graded Lessons for Primary and Junior age pupils were published, the topics for these two groups have been omitted.

Who Selects the Improved Uniform Lessons?

This is a question which I am often asked.

For many years there were two important Sunday-school organizations of the United States and Canada: The International Sunday School Association and The Sunday-School Council; the former a voluntary, popular organization of people interested in the Sunday-schools, the latter an official body composed of editors, publishers, general secretaries, educational secretaries, and field workers of over thirty denominations. In 1922 these two bodies united under the name of The International Sunday School Council of Religious Education.

This Council is a federation of forces by which thirty-six Protestant Denominations and fifty-six State and Provincial Councils co-operate in directing the work of religious education in the United States and Canada. Its three main committees are the Executive Committee, the Committee on Education, and the Lesson Committee. The Committee on Education considers matters relating to standards for the Church-school and educational policies, upon which it makes recommendations to the Executive Committee for final action. The Lesson Committee selects the lessons, both the Uniform and the Graded Series.

The Lesson Committee consists of forty-four men, sixteen of whom are elected by The International Council, and twenty-eight by the twenty-eight co-operating denominations having Sunday School Boards, one from each. This Committee selects the text (and indicates what portion of the whole text shall be printed), the Golden Text, the text for Devotional Reading, and the Topics for Intermediates and Seniors and for Young People and Adults.

The Present Cycle of Lessons

The first cycle of Improved Uniform Lessons was of eight years' duration. The present cycle covers six years, 1926-1931. During this cycle the Old Testament history is studied in chronological order; each of the four Gospels is studied in its entirety; The Acts and the Epistles are studied three times; and four topical courses are studied—Studies in the Christian Life, Some Great Christian Teachings, Some Social Teachings of the Bible, and Some Representative Men and Women of the Bible.

Our Lessons for 1928

Two great aims of our Lesson Committee in planning our lesson courses—the one, "not to allow a cycle of studies at any time to get far away from the central theme of all our Bible study, the life of the world's Redeemer and its extension in the early Church," and the other, to afford an adequate study of the Old Testament—have necessarily resulted at times in there being a far cry from one Quarter's Lessons to another, and our minds have been given a wrench as we turned backward or forward in a week's time over many centuries of history.

For many years I have wished that we might cover the New Testament history consecutively, that we might study in the Gospels what Jesus "began both to do and to teach until the day in which he was received up," and follow this immediately with a study of what he continued to do and to teach through his apostles as told in The Acts and Paul's Epistles. Such a course is ours this year. It is a great course: six months with the Gospel of Mark and then six months with The Acts and the Pauline Epistles.

The acts of Peter, the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts, we have just covered (last Quarter of 1927), and they will still be fresh in our minds six months hence. A brief summary of these twelve chapters will be found in our second lesson of the Third Quarter. Every teacher and pupil should reread these twelve early chapters of Acts before taking up the Third Quarter's lessons.

We are to live the entire year with the Master before us. It is a year's course full of inspiration for daily living. For Christianity is a distinctive way of life, and the Christian religion is the religion of a Person. In the words of Dean Inge, "Christianity is a way of living and believing based on the recorded teaching and spirit of Christ." Dr. J. W. Dawson defines Christianity as "a personal relation with Christ and a personal passion for Christ, producing a character and life which continue the ideals and fulfil the purposes of Christ." Should not the study of Christ's life and of the life of that apostle for whom to live was Christ, fascinate our minds, thrill our hearts, and move our wills to reproduce as far as in us lies that great example?

"No school subject is worth teaching to any group of pupils that in the hands of an average teacher does not command enthusiasm," declares the Editor of the Journal of the National Educational Association. If the books in our year's course do not seem absorbingly interesting and helpful to you, you cannot make them seem absorbingly interesting and helpful to your pupils. It is Socrates who counseled, "Let him that would move the world first move himself."

I once heard a successful actress asked if she did not become very tired repeating the same lines night after night. "Tired!" she exclaimed, "of course not. My part is only half. My audience is the other half. It is a new group each night, a new response which I get each time, and that is always inspiring." You who have a new group of pupils to teach since last we covered these lessons can teach them with the same eager desire to secure the right response. And you to whom the text and the group to be taught are the same as before have no reason for being tired of the repetition, for the text grows in your mind and heart each time you teach it, and your pupils are ready for a larger, fuller understanding and inspiration. Long ago Sir Walter Scott discovered that the more deeply the student works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore.

"If there is anything that makes my life worth while, it is the consciousness that Christ is being opened more and more fully to me." May this experience of Horace Bushnell's be that of all who try to interpret to others the wonder and the beauty, the meaning and the power, of the life of Jesus the Christ.

Next to the Master himself stands Paul. He is called "The Second Founder of the Christian Church." Chrysostom called him "The Heart of the World." He is the supreme interpreter of Jesus Christ and his teaching.

The Apostolic Age is intensely interesting because in it we see the breaking up of narrow bigotry, the development of new ideas and new forces, and the inauguration of new movements. The account is thrilling. "Human action is here, and divine activity. There is the hurry and tramp of feet, and everybody swings into step with the gay courage of cavaliers. These people are out to conquer the world. The drama moves on with quick and exciting adventure till the hero is 'Paul the aged.' How he laments that! As if he would like to return to his yesterdays and recapture their spirit for the fight!"

In his Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters, Dr. J. Paterson Smyth gives the following excellent counsel in regard to reading the history in The Acts:

"Let imagination play on it, supplying force and color, living in the scene, making pictures. It is the main secret of pleasurable reading; 'Put yourself in his place' not merely in picturing the outward scene but also, in so far as may be, entering into the mind of the speakers and actors. Anyone can do it, and it is worth the effort. True, a more vivid imagination will give one an advantage over another, but all that is really needful is some little knowledge of the circumstances and surroundings and the effort to think oneself into them."

All pupils should gain this year a thorough knowledge of The Gospel According to Mark and of The Acts, and a few facts in regard to each of the Epistles from which we have lessons. The information which follows in this Introduction should be taught from week to week. Review questions upon Mark are given in the Review Lesson for the Second Quarter, and upon the other books in the Review Lessons for the Third and Fourth Quarters.

THE BOOKS IN THE COURSE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Its Writer

His Jewish name was John, but his Roman name Mark (Marcus) gradually superseded it. In Acts 12.12 he is called John whose surname was Mark; in Acts 13.5, 13 John, and in Acts 15.39; 2 Timothy and Philemon, Mark. He was the son of a woman named Mary who possessed some wealth, for she had servants and her house at Jerusalem was the meeting-place of the early Christians (Acts 12.12). He was a cousin (or nephew) of Barnabas (Col. 4.10); and probably a convert of Peter, as Peter refers to him as "Mark my son," 1 Pet. 5.13.

By the early Church Fathers he is spoken of as *Kolobodactylus,* maimed in the finger, the tradition being that "he ministered in the priesthood in Israel, being according to the flesh a Levite, and after his conversion he amputated his finger that he might be rejected from the priesthood." It is generally believed that he was the "certain young man" in a linen garment who followed Jesus after his arrest in Gethsemane (Mk. 14.51, 52), because the man is nameless, and Mark is the only Evangelist who records this unimportant event, which has no connection with anything that goes before or after, and seems to be Mark's way of saying, "I was that young man, I saw the Lord seized and led away."

When Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch in Syria after their trip to Jerusalem with contributions for the famine sufferers in Judea (Acts 11.27-30), Mark went with them (Acts 12.25). When the two missionaries started out on their first missionary journey, Mark accompanied them as far as Perga in Pamphylia. There he left them and went back to Jerusalem, greatly to Paul's displeasure, for when Barnabas proposed taking Mark on another missionary journey Paul refused to have him, and so sharp a contention arose between the two men that they separated. Barnabas then took Mark with him to Cyprus (Acts 15.37-40). Paul later became reconciled to Mark, for from his prison-house in Rome he writes of Mark as his fellow-worker (Philemon 24), and refers to him in his letter to the Colossians (4.10). Still later he bade Timothy bring Mark to him, saying that Mark was useful to him for ministering (2 Tim. 4.11).

Tradition makes Mark the founder and first bishop of the church of Alexandria.

The Source of Mark's Knowledge of Christ's Life

There is probably truth in the tradition that Mark was Peter's assistant for a time, and that he derived his knowledge of Jesus' life and deeds mainly from Peter, though he may only have witnessed some of the closing events in Jesus' life. Justin Martyr (100-120 A. D.) calls the Gospel of Mark "The Memoirs of Peter," and Tertullian (about a century later) says that the Gospel of Mark "may be ascribed to Peter, whose interpreter (scribe) Mark was." Noticeable in his Gospel are the details humbling to Peter which the other Evangelists omit, and the vividness of the scenes common to the Synoptists where only Peter, James and John were present. Mark begins and ends with a special mention of Peter: in the beginning is the call of Peter and his brother, and in the end there is the special message from the empty tomb, "Go, tell the disciples and Peter."

The thirteenth chapter with its eschatological discourse is thought to have come from another source than Peter's recollections.

In the Revised Version there is a break between verses eight and nine of the

last chapter of Mark. This calls our attention to the fact that these last verses, 9-20, may not have originally formed a part of Mark's Gospel. In 1891 an Armenian manuscript was discovered in which this section is headed "Of the Presbyter Ariston."

When and for Whom Written

It is believed that Mark's Gospel was the earliest written of all the Gospels, and that both Matthew and Luke used it in writing their accounts of the life of Jesus. With the exception of thirty verses it is entirely incorporated in those two Gospels. It was evidently written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., because of its reference to the showbread in the temple, and is assigned to the years 60-70 A. D., or, more narrowly, 64-68 A. D. According to Irenæus (177 A. D.) it was written after the death of Peter and Paul. Clement of Alexandria says that Mark wrote it in Rome, while Chrysostom, two centuries later, says that he wrote it in Egypt.

The Gospel was written (probably in Greek) for Gentile Christians, as is shown by the careful explanations given of Jewish customs, such as the Passover observances, the washing of hands, and of Aramaic words, such as *Boanerges, Talitha cumi, Ephphatha, corban, Eloi,* and by its omission of all references to the Law and its few references to the Old Testament.

Its Aim

Unlike Matthew, Mark had no belief about Jesus to prove. His only object in writing was to tell clearly certain facts about Jesus, his deeds more especially than his words. That Jesus is the Son of God he proves, not by declaring how he came to earth, but by showing what he accomplished during his brief career here, how his coming changed the world. As Dr. William Thomson states, Mark seems to say, "Behold the Son of God! See his work, his power, his authority, and believe on him."

Its Contents

This is the shortest Gospel; yet while it is surpassed by others in the number of events recorded, in the parallel passages common to all three it is the longest, for Mark writes with circumstantial fulness. Had he lived in an age of journalism, Mark might have become an accomplished précis-writer, the editor of The Bible in the World suggests. "In his concise summary of the Good Tidings, he rules out everything which does not bear directly upon his theme, yet he passes over no detail that will sharpen the impression he wishes to create."

The Gospel omits the infancy and youth of Jesus, and begins at once with his baptism and public ministry. It has only one discourse, the prophecy in regard to the fall of Jerusalem, and only four parables: the Sower, the Seed Growing Secretly, the Mustard Seed, and the Wicked Husbandmen.

It is the events of Jesus' life rather than the teaching of Jesus which Mark mainly records. Indeed, the teaching is singularly lacking. The fourth chapter is remarkable for being devoted to the teaching among other chapters which are crowded with action. The thirty verses which are found only in Mark include the parable of the Seed Growing Secretly, the curing of the deaf and dumb man and of the blind man of Bethsaida, and the mention of the young man who fled at the arrest of Jesus.

In the first part of the Gospel, Mark's account of Jesus' life is of a fragmentary nature, a little told here and a little there; but when he reaches the last week of Jesus' life he devotes one third of his Gospel to a circumstantial record.

In the Gospel according to Mark we see the shortness and the strenuousness and the marvelous power of Jesus' ministry; his obedience to God's will is emphasized; and his popularity with the multitude, the growing opposition of the Pharisees, the events that foreshadowed the end, and his efforts to prepare his disciples therefor, are clearly portrayed.

Because so much stress is laid upon Christ's humanity in this Gospel, Augustine assigns to Mark the symbol of a man.

Its Arrangement and Outline

Events are given in an orderly way, connected with the places and circumstances in which they occurred.

Papias, the bishop who lived about 130 A. D., explains Mark's arrangement: "Mark neither heard the Lord, nor followed him; but afterwards attended Peter,

who adapted his instructions to the needs of his hearers but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he had heard, or to set down any false statement therein."

I. The Period of Preparation. 1.1-13.
  1. The preaching of the Baptist. 1.1-8.
  2. The baptism and temptation. 1.9-13.
II. The First Period of the Galilean Ministry. 1.14 to 3.6.
III. The Second Period of the Galilean Ministry. 3.7 to 7.23.
IV. The Third Period of the Galilean Ministry. 7.24 to 9.50.
V. The Perean Ministry. 10.1-52.
VI. Holy Week. 11.1 to 15.47.
VII. Resurrection, Forty Days, and Ascension. 16.1-20.

Its Style

Naturalness, straightforwardness, and vigor characterize Mark's sympathetic account of the life of Jesus as he went about doing good. He pictures Jesus as moving swiftly from event to event, and his characteristic word is *straightway,* which occurs forty-two times in the Revised Version (in the Authorized Version the one Greek word *eutheos* is variously translated—straightway, immediately, forthwith, anon, as soon as, shortly). "And Jesus began to—" this is Mark's favorite way of beginning his account of an incident. He often uses the present tense as though the events were just happening.

There are numerous realistic touches in the narrative which disclose the freshness of memory and vividness of impression of an eye-witness of events. He records the emotions and looks and gestures of Jesus, and gives other graphic details not found in the other Gospels, such as the mention in the account of the feeding of the five thousand, of the greenness of the grass and the sitting down in companies, where he uses a Greek word that means arranged as in flowerbeds; he tells us that the swine "ran violently down a steep place into the sea," that Jesus "was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on the pillow," that Jesus "sat down over against the treasury" as he watched the bringing of gifts.

THE ACTS

Its Title

The Acts, the book is called in the Revised Version; The Acts of the Apostles is its full title in the Authorized Version. It is not an account of the acts of all the apostles: it tells of the acts of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, but aside from the list of the apostles given in 1.13, only Peter, John and the two Jameses are mentioned again by name. I like the title given to the book by a native of Africa —Words Concerning Deeds.

By Whom Written

Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of The Acts. Some scholars believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the "Travel Documents," which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke was the writer of the entire book.

The book itself does not name the writer. However, in his introductory sentence, the writer tells us that it is a continuation of a former work; he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the Third Gospel is addressed; and The Acts resembles the Third Gospel in vocabulary and style. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and The Acts. The Acts is Volume II, as it were, of Luke's History of the Origin and Spread of Christianity, the Gospel According to Luke being Volume I.

Luke was a Greek by birth, and a physician by profession. Not only was he Paul's companion on many journeys, as the use of the pronoun *we* shows, but he was with Paul in Rome when he wrote Colossians and Philemon, and was his sole companion and friend when he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy shortly before his death. Luke is mentioned by name but three times in all the New Testament; and each time by Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician."

The Date

Great divergence of opinion exists as to the probable date when this history

was written. It was known in Rome (as the First Epistle of Clement shows) by 95 A. D. Because it contains no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem its date is placed by some before 70 A. D., but this inference is not conclusive. Because it records the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome its date may be given as subsequent to 63 A. D.

The Purpose of the Book

The Acts is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity has left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and has developed the Gentile field under Paul. The Acts is the history of the expansion of the early Church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling his commission to teach the world. It is Christianity in action.

In his introduction, Luke declares the purpose of his writing, and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus began to do and to teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus continued to do and to teach through his followers. Jesus had commanded them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. This command to preach the Gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command is obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for his guidance is recognized at every step.

In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish law; and the supreme greatness of Paul, whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

The Character of the Book

It is turbulent, tumultuous history which the book records. It is a record of triumphant achievements in spite of Jewish jealousy, prejudice and persecution, pagan opposition, and Roman power.

The theme of the preaching is Jesus the Christ. Thirteen great prayer-meetings, nine great revivals, and ten great sermons are recorded.

The Reliability of the Book

Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out that the veracity of no ancient writing is so well tested as that of The Acts, because no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish or Greek or Roman. The history of The Acts covers a period of thirty years, enacted in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. During that time political changes were frequent, and yet Luke is never found at fault, whether writing of imperial provinces or senatorial provinces, of proconsuls, procurators, politarchs, asiarchs, or prætors, or of the Sanhedrin and Herodian princes and rulers of synagogues.

The Outline of the Book

I. Introduction. 1.1-5.
II. The Christian Community at Jerusalem under the Leadership of Peter, 1.6 to 6.6.
III. The Martyrdom of Stephen. 6.7 to 8.1.
IV. Evangelization in Judea and Samaria under the Leadership of Philip and Peter, 8.2 to 11.18. (Paul's Conversion. 9.1-30.)
V. Ministry of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch in Syria. 11.19-30.
VI. Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. 12.1-25.
VII. Evangelization of Asia Minor and Europe under the Leadership of Paul. 13.1 to 28.31.
    1. Paul's First Missionary Journey. 13.1 to 14.28.
    2. The Council at Jerusalem and the Grant of Gentile Liberty. 15.1-35.
    3. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. 15.36 to 18.22.
    4. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. 18.23 to 21.16.
VIII. Paul's Last Years. 21.17 to 28.31.

Its Lessons for Today

A young woman who had just finished reading Stanley Jones' Christ of the

Indian Road said to me, "It makes me feel so small." We do not think of comparing ourselves with the great apostle Paul, but we find in the record of his life a mighty force impelling toward Christian love, missionary zeal, and heroic living. Who can read it without an irresistible desire to have his share in making Jesus the Christ known to the uttermost part of the earth?

THE PAULINE EPISTLES

Their Genuineness

The thirteen earliest written books of the New Testament are the Epistles of Paul, every one of which begins with his name in the salutation, thus: "Paul . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth," "Paul . . . to all that are in Rome," and so on. In 2 Thessalonians 3.17 there is his autographic attestation to the genuineness of the letter which was dictated to and written by another: "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." In four other epistles there is a similar attestation: Gal. 6.11; 1 Cor. 16.20; Philemon 19; Col. 4.18.

The true Pauline character of all these epistles is attested also by the letters themselves.

Their Relation to The Acts

Paul's Epistles both confirm and supplement The Acts. In The Acts we have the external, objective history of the primitive church; in the Epistles, the subjective, internal record.

Their probable order in the history of The Acts may be thus indicated:
After Acts 18.5, First Thessalonians.
After Acts 18.11, Second Thessalonians.
After Acts 19.10, First Corinthians.
After Acts 20.1, Second Corinthians.
After Acts 20.2, Galatians.
After Acts 20.3, Romans.
After Acts 28.30, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.
After Paul's Release, First Timothy and Titus.
During Paul's Second Imprisonment, Second Timothy.

The Occasion of Their Writing

Seven were written to churches which Paul himself founded, two (Colossians and Romans) to other churches, and four (First and Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon) to individuals.

They are Paul's personal letters to friends, written in response to some question, or occasioned by some personal matter or some particular difficulty or threatening danger. There are references in them which were familiar to his first readers, but are not understandable now. We may imagine that in replying to a letter received from one of his churches he held that letter in his hand and followed point after point as he dictated his answer to his scribe or secretary, perhaps repeating some of its very words.

The letters were written to strengthen faith, to rebuke sins, to instruct, to exhort. They were composed in the midst of great persecutions and dangers, while engaged in incessant missionary labors, and yet they are instinct with Paul's loving sympathy and keen interest in the welfare of his readers.

Their Form

The letters have certain features in common. They begin with an inscription and words of greeting. The first part of the body of the letter contains Paul's doctrinal discussions, his profound theology, and then, usually with a connecting "therefore"—for Paul's faith must lead to conduct—the letter passes to his practical instructions, his principles of conduct. Most of the letters close with personal words and a benediction.

Their Inspiration and Value for Us

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," are the confident words of the apostles in the first Christian letter recorded in Acts 15. "The love of Christ constraineth us," are words of Paul to the Corinthians that apply to his writings.

"All his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth."

While many themes that occupied Paul's attention have now lost their force—such as the question whether a Christian should eat meat that had been offered to idols—yet the general principles of religious conduct by which he settled troublesome questions are as helpful now as when they were first written, as applicable to us as to the ones to whom they were addressed. Though written in special emergencies for a special people, with all the anxious thought and care of a pastor, these letters have their messages for all ages and all peoples. They contain truths for all time. The proof of their inspiration is that they have inspired Christian faith throughout more than eighteen hundred years.

Their Order

The order in which Paul's letters are printed in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. The longest letters are printed first, and perhaps at the time the arrangement was made the supposed order of importance of the churches and individuals to whom the letters were written influenced the order of their presentation. They should be studied in their historical order.

The Epistles written during his missionary activity are: First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans.

Those written during his first imprisonment at Rome are: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.

The Pastorial Epistles were written, it is believed, after his first imprisonment: Titus, First and Second Timothy.

FIRST CORINTHIANS

To Whom Written

It was to the church which he had founded in Corinth that Paul wrote this Epistle from Ephesus, probably in 57 A. D. It was sent in the names of Paul and Sosthenes, the latter doubtless the scribe to whom Paul dictated it.

The Character of the Letter

In it Paul combats the false reports which were being circulated about himself and his authority, exhorts his readers to Christian unity, and rebukes their immoralities. In it we see Paul as the shepherd of souls. His regard for his flock has been compared to that of a father for a promising son, a son beset with temptations, whose character combined great excellencies with great defects. It shows Paul's penetrating insight, profound reflections, and practical wisdom, his liberality in all matters of indifference, and his strictness in all matters of right and wrong.

The great theme of the letter is the professing Christian's need of practical godliness. The keynote may be taken as that of 3.16: "Ye are the temple of God"—therefore you must live lives of sanctity and service.

Its Lessons for Us

The two great chapters of the Epistles are the thirteenth upon love and the fifteenth upon the resurrection, two peaks of such lofty grandeur, Professor William Lyon Phelps calls them, that they tower above everything else in the world's literature except the actual words of Jesus in the Gospels.

The first chapter is a fervent appeal for unity; in the eighth chapter are glowing words about liberty; in the eleventh chapter is a beautiful account of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning the Epistle's special value for us, Dr. A. T. Robinson writes: "Paul had to meet the live issues of a mission church in a great and wicked city. These issues vary greatly in value. They range from petty prejudices about preachers to the great doctrine of the resurrection, from serious moral lapses to the eating of meats offered to idols, from the problem of marriage to the collection for the poor, from going to law before the heathen to misuse of the spiritual gifts. But the remarkable thing about it all is that in the treatment of casuistical questions Paul does not use mere dialectical skill. He seeks the Christian principle that will guide one aright. In doing this he marked the way for Christians in all similar matters. Some, indeed most, of these problems in casuistry have long since passed away, but others have arisen like them. Hence First Corinthians is the most modern of all Paul's writings. Some of the same problems survive with us in a somewhat altered form. But in any case Paul's Christian insight helps every honest-hearted man today who longs to walk in the footsteps of Jesus."

SECOND CORINTHIANS

To Whom Written

This letter is formally addressed not only "to the church of God which is at Corinth," but also "to all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia." It was written from Macedonia during Paul's third missionary journey, about the year 57 A. D.

After writing his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul sent Titus (possibly with the letter) to learn how its words of counsel and warning were received. Later Paul left Ephesus for Troas, but not finding Titus there, went into Macedonia to meet him. There Titus brought him word that his letter had been well received by the majority of Christians at Corinth, who sent him messages of warmest affection. Paul's mind was greatly relieved by this news, but he was filled with indignation on being told that a minority of Jews refused to submit to his authority and were actively engaged in undermining his work. Thereupon he wrote this Second Epistle, which is directed now to the faithful church in words of tenderness and love, and now to his false detractors, the corruptors of the church, in words of deepest severity.

Because the severe reproof of the last four chapters follows somewhat strangely the kindly wording of the first nine chapters, some scholars think that they are a part of another letter which once Paul regretted having written (2 Cor. 7.8), but their bitterly controversial tone is readily attributed to the circumstances that called them forth.

Its Character and Contents

It has no special topic. Three thoughts seem to have filled Paul's mind as he wrote; gratitude for the good reception of the earlier letter, indignation at the insinuations of his opponents, and desire of hastening the collection of money for the relief of the poor in Judea.

It is the most personal of the longer letters, and also the least methodical. It abounds in allusions which are obscure to us, and therefore it is probably the least read of all Paul's letters. It is valuable in affording us an insight into the great apostle's trials and joys, and chapters eleven and twelve are of especial value for the account they contain of his life.

Dr. Lyman Abbott suggests that while the other letters might be compared to sermons and addresses, this can only be compared to a prayer-meeting talk. It is an impassioned outpouring of Paul's heart and reveals the "varied emotions that succeeded and encountered one another in his impulsive soul—deep contrition and thankfulness toward God, the reformer's wrath, irony and trenchant candor toward the vicious."

Its Lessons for Us

The letter has been compared to the overture of Parsifal, which contains the motifs that are afterwards worked out in the opera; it contains the motifs of his subsequent writing, the seeds of everything wrought out more fully in the Epistles to the Galatians, the Romans, the Philippians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters are crowded with deep, beautiful, spiritual thoughts.

ROMANS

To Whom Written

The address upon this letter is "To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," 1.7. The origin of the church at Rome is unknown; it may have been founded by the "sojourners from Rome" who were among those who believed at Pentecost. From 1.5; 11.13; 15.15, 16, we infer that it consisted largely of Gentiles.

Although Paul had neither founded nor visited this church at Rome, he had heard much about it and he knew many individuals there. Some of them he mentions in the sixteenth chapter, beginning with Priscilla and Aquila, already known to us through their work with Paul at Corinth and Ephesus, and ending with "all the saints."

The Occasion for the Letter and Its Date

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire. From Rome the gospel might radiate to all the world, and Paul's heart had claimed the whole world for Christ. "I must see Rome," he had said. His plan of campaign included Spain and, no doubt,

northwestern Africa and even Britain. Rome was the key to this work in the western half of the Empire. With his face turned toward the West, Paul wrote his Letter to the Christians of Rome, whom he had longed "these many years" to see, in order to win their confidence in advance and thus prepare the way for his coming. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, 15.15, 16, and his heart yearned to win some of them at Rome for Christ, even as he had other Gentiles, 1.13.

Paul wrote this letter, in all probability, from Corinth toward the close of his Third Missionary Journey, shortly before he started on what proved to be his last journey to Jerusalem, with contributions from the Greek churches to the poor there, in 57 A. D. The scribe to whom he dictated the letter was Tertius, 16.22; the messenger by whom it was sent to Rome was Phœbe, 16.1, 2, a deaconess of Cenchreæ.

Its Character and Contents

This is the longest of Paul's letters. In it he is not considering questions called up by a letter from the church or by conditions in the church, as in his other letters. He is carrying out independent trains of thought in which he is supremely interested. It is his greatest theological writing. It is "the gospel according to Paul." "In this Epistle a heroic spirit, a universal outlook, a note of triumph over controversy and misrepresentation, an imperialistic instinct, and a profound insight into human nature, has united to inspire its intense passion and its unique power."

Romans is the most abstract of all Paul's letters; indeed, it is a great theological treatise rather than a personal letter. At a very early date it was published in two forms: the one as it appears in our Bibles today, and the other with all the personal references omitted as a treatise for schools.

The keynote of Romans is 1.16, 17—"the gospel, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul's object was not to give a complete system of Christian doctrine, but to give a full treatment of the doctrine of salvation through Christ. Salvation is not "of works," is not merited by man's goodness, is not attained by works of obedience to the law: salvation is "of grace," it is God's free gift and is appropriated by man through faith in Christ the Redeemer. The doctrine of "salvation by works" meant that every good deed had a certain saving value, that religion consisted of prayers and offerings of sacrifices and giving of alms—of such obedience, in fact, to the Mosaic law as the Pharisees of Christ's time had held to be essential, although now coupled with this external and legalistic religion was a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. The Jews saw no inconsistency in thus trying to serve two masters. The mission of Paul's letter was to show that one could not hold the two ways of salvation; that one could not be both a Jew of the old dispensation and a Christian of the new; that the Mosaic law had served its purpose in preparing the way for the gospel of Christ.

The practical part of the letter, chapters 12 to 15, treats of the cultivation of various Christian virtues, civil duties, the right of private judgment, and the doctrine of Christian expediency in its relation to weak faith.

At times Paul's thoughts seem to throng his mind faster than he can dictate. The first sentence is seven verses long. Parenthetical thoughts are often pursued to such length that one is in danger of forgetting the main line of reasoning which they interrupt.

Its Lessons for Us

So common today are the sins which the letter denounces that the Chinese helper to whom a missionary was dictating a translation stopped his work, exclaiming with great feeling: "This, a picture of the Chinese people, and I will not have the story sent out to the world." After Dr. Ashmore had translated it into the Chinese language the people said to him: "You wrote this since you came. In this book you wrote against us."

There is a striking resemblance between Paul's counsels and precepts and those of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul never sat at the feet of Jesus, but he knew the mind of Jesus. We agree with Luther that "Romans is such a treasury of spiritual riches, and, as it were, such an overflowing cornucopia, that if we read it a thousand times over, there is always something to be found new in it, so that the last time of reading it will be the most profitable."

Chapter VIII, with its great theme of the nature and the joys and the high

requirements of the Christian life, is one of the most eloquent and beautiful as well as helpful chapters in the Bible.

EPHESIANS

Although addressed to the Church at Ephesus, this may have been a circular letter designed for all the churches in the Roman Province of Asia, as many scholars believe, because it contains no indication of the friendly, intimate terms on which Paul was with the members of the Ephesian Church with whom he had lived and labored for three whole years. Archbishop Usher was the first to state the belief that it was an encyclical letter which Tychichus was to take first to Ephesus and then to other churches.

The letter was written while Paul was "a prisoner of Christ" in Rome.

Its Character and Contents

Paul's chief purpose in writing this Epistle was to warn his readers against factions, to encourage brotherly love, and to urge them to seek a closer fellowship with Christ. Oft-recurring expressions are "in Christ" and words that denote "fellowship." It is a plea for unity in diversity. However different each one's gifts, all may be united in Christ Jesus. Christians form the body of which Christ is the unseen Head.

Adolphe Monod describes it as embracing in its brevity the whole field of the Christian religion. "It expounds now its doctrines, now its morals, with such conciseness and such fulness combined that it would be difficult to name any great doctrine, or any essential duty, which has not its place marked therein."

Ephesians and Romans are Paul's profoundest writings, and Ephesians has been termed "the richest and most glorious product of the active mind of Paul." Coleridge speaks of it as "one of the divinest compositions of man." "There is a peculiar and sustained loftiness in its teaching which has deeply impressed the greatest minds and has earned for it the title of the 'Epistle of the Ascension.' It tarries largely among 'the heavenlies,' and lifts us into the eternities. It is characterized by a dignity and a serenity which are entirely in harmony with the elevation of its thoughts."

Dr. F. B. Meyer declares that "in the present state of religion in this country we have to take single sentences of these massive utterances and beat them out thin, or our congregations and classes would melt away."

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

Why Written

Philemon was a resident of Colossæ in Phrygia, who had been converted through Paul's ministry, perhaps at Ephesus. His slave Onesimus had run away, and at Rome had come under Paul's influence and been converted to Christ. He had served Paul with grateful devotion, and Paul had become much attached to him. When Tychicus went to Asia Minor (Col. 4.7-9), Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this special letter of intercession.

Its Contents and Character

In this letter Paul asks Philemon to forgive his run-a-way slave and take him back, and it is a delight to see the skill with which he makes this request. In the words of Dr. Alexander Maclaren:

"The warmth, the delicacy, and what, if it were not so spontaneous, we might call tact, the graceful ingenuity with which he pleads for the fugitive, the perfect courtesy of every word, the gleam of playfulness—all fused together and harmonized to one end, and that in so brief a compass and with such unstudied ease and complete self-oblivion, make this Epistle a pure gem. Without thought of effect, and with complete unconsciousness, this man beats all the famous letter-writers on their own ground. That must have been a great intellect, and closely conversant with the Fountain of all light and beauty, which could shape the profound and far-reaching teachings of the Epistle to the Colossians, and pass from them to the graceful simplicity and sweet kindliness of this exquisite letter; as if Michael Angelo had gone straight from smiting his magnificent Moses from

the marble mass to incise some delicate and tiny figure of Love or Friendship on a cameo."

"If we sought to show the secret of Paul's success as a missionary," writes R. D. Shaw in The Pauline Epistles, "we should certainly turn to this brief epistle in preference almost to any other. For that secret did not lie so much in his masterly generalship of the churches, or in his great ability in the statement and defense of the gospel, as in his devoted love to individual souls. It was by his affectionate, personal interest that he undoubtedly obtained his singular hold upon men. Wherever he went, hearts responded to this winsome attachment. The sunshine of his solicitude seemed to focus itself on each single life, and to make that life its peculiar care. Great as he is when panoplied in theological armor, 'sheathed with logic and bristling with arguments,' he is greater still as he lavishes himself in the personal ministry of love, and seeks to win his crown in the growing grace and peace of the souls whom he has brought into the Kingdom of Christ. We might have gathered as much from allusions in other epistles, but this one makes it particularly vivid, and, indeed, presents us with a quite unique picture of the apostle in all the charm of his intimate intercourse with his friends."

FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY

Who Was Timothy?

Timothy was the best beloved of all Paul's younger friends. In his letters to him he calls him "My true child in faith," "My dearly beloved son." Timothy's mother was a Jewess, and his father a Greek. They lived either in Lystra or Derbe. By his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, Timothy had been taught the sacred writings as a child, and when Paul came to his city and preached faith in Christ, Timothy was among the converts. He accompanied Paul on various journeys, and we meet him at Ephesus, Philippi, Berœa, Corinth and Rome. "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do," Paul wrote the Corinthians; and to the Philippians he wrote, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. As a son with the father he hath served me in the gospel." In his second letter Paul says, "I thank God how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications."

When the Letters to Timothy Were Written

First Timothy was written when Paul was free and refers to journeys not recorded in The Acts, while Second Timothy was written from a Roman cell. A satisfactory hypothesis accepted by many scholars is that Paul was released from the imprisonment at Rome recorded in The Acts and spent some time in journeys during which he wrote his first letter to Timothy (and his letter to Titus), and that Second Timothy was written during his final imprisonment at Rome on the eve of his martyrdom.

Their Character

The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus are called The Pastoral Epistles because they are addressed to those two favorite pupils, friends, and fellow-workers in their official capacity as pastors, and give directions for the founding and governing of churches and the treatment of members. Evidently they were intended to be read to the church, for Paul "is writing with his eye on the community."

First Timothy

Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to instruct Timothy to be bold in his opposition to false teachers and to guide him in the organization of the church, especially in his selection of its officers. The letter contains nine charges to Timothy and many exhortations.

Second Timothy

This letter is more personal than pastoral in its nature. After a salutation and introduction, Paul counsels Timothy to be a true soldier of Christ, to avoid controversy, and to beware of threatening dangers, and concludes with personal messages and a benediction. Bengel calls this "The last will and testament of Paul, and his swan song."

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Lesson I—January 1

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: He must increase, but I must decrease. John 3.30

LESSON Mark 1.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 40.3-11

MARK 1.1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way; 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight; 4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the country of Judæa, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and *had* a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in the Jordan. 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: 11 and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TITLE OF THE GOSPEL, verse 1. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our word *gospel* is a compound of the two Anglo-Saxon words *god,* meaning good, and *spel,* meaning news. The word as used in the New Testament refers to the message of good tidings, not to one of its first four books, to which it was not applied before the second century. It is the good tidings concerning Jesus

the Christ, the Son of God, which Mark begins here to recount. This first verse is Mark's confession of faith.

"Every time Christ is born in a man's heart, the gospel has a new beginning. And every other beginning of the gospel—its beginning in the eternal purpose of God (John), its beginning at Bethlehem (Matthew and Luke), its beginnnig at the baptism (Mark)—will be of none effect, as far as you and I are concerned, unless it has another beginning in you and me" (J. D. Jones).

II. THE WORK OF THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST, verses 2-8. Verses 2, 3 and 4 are all one sentence, and seven words give their meaning, namely, Even as it is written, John came. For an account of the parents of John and of his training in the wilderness, turn to the Gospel of Luke. Verse 2 is from Malachi 3.1, and is applied in Mt. 11.10 and Lk. 7.27 by Jesus himself to John's mission. Verse 3 is from Isaiah 40.3-5. John the Baptist was God's messenger sent to prepare the way for Jesus the Son of God. He was the voice in the wilderness announcing the coming of the Lord and warning men to be ready. Instead of discoursing upon the material glory of the Messianic period, as was the universal custom, John insisted that there were requirements to be fulfilled, and turned men's thoughts away from the outward and material to the inward and spiritual.

"The revival of religion needed today to prepare for the fuller coming of the Son of Man into our earthly life and to secure that richer baptism of all our relationships in the divine spirit, is a revival strongly ethical and genuinely social, rather than ecclesiastical or emotional. Let the call issue north, south, east and west, for an 'about face' towards righteousness in the common relations of everyday life! 'Then all flesh may see the salvation of God!'" (Charles Reynolds Brown).

"Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain." As uttered by Isaiah, *the Lord* means Jehovah, and the words were addressed to the exiles of Babylon: as applied to John the Baptist, *the Lord* refers to Jesus.

The ways and paths of the Lord are men's souls: everything that would hinder the Lord's coming into men's hearts must be removed. Moreover, just as valleys must be filled in as well as hills cut away to make a level highway, so good deeds must be done as well as evil deeds avoided, in order to open the highway for the King of Kings.

John came, who baptized in the wilderness of Judea—whence his name of The Baptist—and preached the baptism of repentance in order to obtain forgiveness of sins. John clearly saw the sins of his time and the need of reformation: see Mt. 3.7-10. The whole province of Judea was stirred by John's preaching, and multitudes were baptized in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

"Baptism is an act of profession, and is related to repentance as a declaration of forgiveness is to forgiveness" (Gould).

All the Evangelists speak of the rite of baptism as if nothing strange, but whether it was a new rite originating with John, or whether it was a rite that had long been practised in the case of proselytes to Judaism, we do not know. There is no record of proselyte baptism before the Christian era, although most scholars agree with Dr. Plummer who declares that it is not credible that it did not exist previously. John's baptizing was different from the many ceremonial washings of Judaism: the baptizing "unto remission of sins" was a distinctive rite of John's ministry. A writer in the Expository Times suggests that John's baptism must have been connected with the apocalyptic expectation of the Jews, that somehow it was to be a feature of the Messiah's kingdom. John 1.25 clearly connects baptism with the coming of the Messiah.

The prophet's garb was like Elijah's (2 K. 1.8). The coarse cloth woven from the long, shaggy hair of the camel was harsher and more durable than that made of goat's hair. A leather girdle confined his long, loose garment. His food came from the wilderness where he lived, and consisted of locusts and honey made by wild bees.

In the Talmud the Christ is spoken of as *Habba,* the Coming One. This Coming One, John declared, was mightier than he, whose shoe latchet he was not worthy

to unloose. See Light from Oriental Life. The word *latchet* recalls our word *latch*. The latchet of a shoe was the shoe latch, fastener, the thong or narrow string of leather which fastened the sandal to the foot.

"I baptized you in water," John declared, "but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit." John says in effect: "My influence is like the water I use, cold and incapable of imparting life; but the Coming One will have the energy of a mighty Spirit, which will burn out the evil in your natures." It is interesting to recall that in some early copies of Luke's Gospel, the second petition of the Lord's Prayer reads, "May the Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us."

"Human sin needs deeper remedy than repentance and the water symbolic of moral cleansing: it must be driven out and replaced by the affections and energies of a new life, a life of spirit of which the only source and maintenance is the Spirit of God. The instability of repentance not supplemented by the control of new impulses and aspirations is impressively illustrated by the parable of Mt. 12.43-45" (S. W. Green).

Matthew and Luke add the Baptist's denunciations and warnings: Mt. 3.7-12; Lk. 3.7-14.

Why did not the Baptist himself follow Jesus? Why, feeling, as he did, the inward sense of sin, did he not follow the Lamb of God? Why, feeling, as he said, his need of being baptized of Christ, did he not seek from him the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire? Why, having preached the advent of the kingdom, was he content to remain without—less than the least within it? Why did he continue to hold around him a school of those who attached themselves to him in preference to following the greater Leader? These questions are asked by a writer in The Expository Times, who then gives the suggestion of Dr. Lambert that John was perfectly loyal to Christ in all this, but felt that there was still need for a work of preparation, and room, therefore, for a discipleship to the Forerunner. "And, indeed, one can well understand that a work like John's could not be finished all of a sudden, and that energies like John's could not sink back into inaction. No doubt, too, it would take time to effect the transference of his followers to Jesus; time, too, for the work of Jesus to attain to the same proportions, and to bulk as largely in the public eye, as John's."

III. A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN THE LIFE OF JESUS, verses 9-11. It came to pass in the days when John was baptizing, that Jesus came from Nazareth (where he had lived thirty years) and was baptized by John in the Jordan. John sought to hinder him, and said in surprise, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" but Jesus answered, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Mt. 3.15).

Later, Jesus asked (Mt. 21.25), "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or from men?" It was of God, hence Jesus submitted to the ordinance. It was, moreover, his public endorsement of John as a messenger of God, and was a rite which he later enjoined on his followers. And it was for him a formal setting apart, a consecration, for his great mission.

Now comes Mark's first "Straightway," a word which we shall often meet in our lessons, for he uses it forty-two times. Straightway, immediately, Jesus beheld a symbolical vision—the heavens were rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descended upon him. You have seen pictures which represent the scene literally. In Margaret Deland's story, The Awakening of Helena Ritchie, little David gazes at such a picture and is fascinated by the face which looks out of a cloud above the two figures in the river. He asks about the face and is told by the minister that it represents God. "Is that a good photograph of God?" the lad persists, and Dr. Lavendar looks at the small boy with understanding eyes and wisely answers, "If it looks like a kind Father, I think it is a good photograph of God."

The expressions about the rending of the heavens, the Spirit descending as a dove, and the voice out of the heavens, all indicate that Jesus was filled with the Spirit of God and consecrated to his ministry. "The open sky was a revelation to Jesus Christ of new spiritual forces that lay within his reach," is Dr. F. B. Meyer's explanation; "it was just as when Newton discovered the law of gravitation and heaven was opened to him: so Jesus saw the heavens opened." It was a unique experience in the life of Jesus up to this time, and we think of it as the hour when he first fully realized his mission to the world. Dr. R. F. Horton, with

this thought in mind, heads the chapter in his book which recalls the experience, "Jesus Becomes Christ."

And a voice came out of the heavens, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." "All men have it obscurely in them to be sons of God; but to be the beloved Son, and therefore to make the will and nature of the Father palpable and to give to as many as received him power themselves to become sons of God—was not this the greatest task and the greatest glory, ever laid upon a Son of Man?" (John Franklin Genung). "The Gospel records and our own reflections assure us that Jesus must have learned who he was, little by little. The statement that he increased in wisdom is a certification of that. And now the moment is one of crisis. A great, new, marvelous truth has entered into his life. And he is saying over and over to himself, trying to understand it in the fullness of its infinite meaning: 'I am the Messiah! I am the Christ! I am he for whom society has all along been looking and waiting! I am come in answer to the prayers of the ages! I am the Servant of the Highest, the Ambassador of Heaven, the Son of God, the Savior of the World!'"

"His self-consecration was rewarded as ours is today by a clearer vision of the purposes of God, by a quiet consciousness of endowment with God-given capacity for his work, and by a vivid sense of holy and filial intimacy with the Divine Being himself" (J. J. Ross).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I send my messenger before thy face, verse 2. For a royal personage there are three sets of heralds, Canon Tristram explains: the first, on the day before his arrival; the second, on the morning of the day; and the third (those whom we should call outriders), immediately before him. "The preaching of repentance by the Baptist is thus compared to the outrunner's torch, casting its light on those that sat in darkness, and rousing them to prepare to receive their Messiah."

Make ye ready the way of the Lord, verse 3. Roads in the East were originally built by the king's order, and they were repaired whenever the king was to ride over them.

Did eat locusts, verse 6. All the Bedouins of Arabia and the inhabitants of the towns of Nejd and Hedjaz are accustomed to eat locusts. I have seen at Medina and Tayf locust shops where they were sold by measure. In Egypt and Nubia they are eaten only by the poorest beggars. The Arabs in preparing them for eating throw them alive into the boiling water, with which a good deal of salt has been mixed. After a few minutes they take them out and dry them in the sun. The head, feet and wings are then torn off, the bodies cleansed from the salt, and perfectly dried. I found them very good when eaten after the Arab fashion, stewed with butter. They tasted something like shrimps, but with less flavor.—H. B. Tristram.

Locusts

Locust eating is common in the Philippine Islands today, and it is an interesting commentary on the story of John, that in the year 1923 the Bureau of Agriculture of the Philippines issued a special bulletin, giving various receipts for cooking locusts. There had been a plague of locusts, and it was characteristic of human ingenuity to turn this curse into a means of life. Directions were given for frying them, drying them, and for preparing them with chopped pineapple like a salad, and with sliced tomatoes like a club sandwich.—William Lyon Phelps.

And wild honey, verse 6. Wild honey is procured in great abundance throughout the hilly parts of the wilderness. The bees find abundant natural hives in the fissures

of the cliffs, whilst the amazing abundance of flowers which carpet the ground after the showers of spring, provide abundant material for their stores of sweetness. Far the largest supply of honey in the markets of Jerusalem and Hebron is brought in by the tribes of the wilderness, who find bee-hunting a lucrative occupation.—H. B. Tristram.

The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose, verse 7. No other words could so forcibly express to orientals John's sense of his inferiority to Jesus. The sandals worn by Jesus were merely leather soles kept on the feet by means of leather thongs. On entering a house a man's sandals were taken off and his feet dusted by a servant. So menial was this service held to be that the rabbis said, "Every service which a servant will perform for his master, a disciple will do for his rabbi, except loosing his sandal thong."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

When Isaiah received his call to service, what vision did he see? (A lesson of last year.) What prophet about whom we studied last year was John the Baptist like, and why?

John the Baptist

Zacharias was a priest who, while serving in the temple, was told by an "angel of the Lord" that he should have a son whom he should call John. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." When John suddenly appeared in the hilly country of Judea and, aiming straight at the evils of the time, issued his call for personal repentance, the whole country round saw in his bold words the call of their great prophets. He spoke indeed in the spirit and power of Elijah. Religious movements, the coming of the Messiah, were the important topics of the time. All flocked to hear him, and all were greatly moved by his words.

The Beginnings of the Gospels

Matthew begins his Gospel by tracing the genealogy of Jesus back to "David the son of Abraham." Next he records the birth of Jesus, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the return of the family to Nazareth, and then tells us about John the Baptist. Luke, after a brief preface, records the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation to Mary, the Magnificat, the birth and childhood of the Baptist, the birth and infancy of Jesus and the visit of the Shepherds, and the visit of the Boy Jesus to the temple, and then takes up the ministry of John the Baptist. Mark begins at once with the ministry of John.

The Date

It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar that John came baptizing and preaching, according to Luke. Augustus, the first Cæsar, died in 14 A. D., but Tiberius had then been associated with him for thirty years, having equal authority in the government of the provinces, hence the fifteenth year of Tiberius is reckoned from 11 A. D., making the date of John's preaching and of the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, 26 A. D.

To the Jews who, after the return from exile, were in danger of drifting away from God, the prophet Malachi gave this promise, which is the last sentence of his book: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come." That it was a literal coming of Elijah which the prophet meant is refuted by the words of Jesus himself when he said of John the Baptist, "This is Elijah, that is to come." Just what the words of the prophecy of the coming day of the Lord meant to Malachi we do not know, but to us they mean a prophecy of the coming of Jesus the Christ.

When John came, four centuries had elapsed since the voice of the last Old Testament prophet had been heard. John was the last of the prophets and the first of the evangelists. Dr. Broadus compares his work to a landing-place in a stairway; it is the highest step of the lower flight, or the lowest step of the upper flight.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The *wilderness of Judea* is the desolate, hilly region west of the Dead Sea and south of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Canon Tristram says that the wolf and bear,

jackal and hyena and lion were as plentiful there as game on a Scotch moor. There John began his preaching and then moved northward into the Jordan Valley to baptize in the Jordan River.

The traditional site of his baptizing, called *Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan* to distinguish it from Bethany on the Mount of Olives, is a short distance north of the Dead Sea, opposite Jericho. The site believed by modern scholars to be the true one is found about fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

The Jordan River System

Galilee is the northernmost of the three provinces of Palestine west of the Jordan. *Nazareth* of Galilee is eighteen miles west of the Sea of Galilee. It is built upon a hill and is itself surrounded by hills. From Nazareth, Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be taxed, and there Jesus was born. They returned to Nazareth with Jesus after the flight into Egypt, and there Jesus lived till he went to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Teachers of Intermediates and Seniors will find it helpful to write upon the blackboard each week the Sentence Sermons given under the topic for these departments which are appropriate to the day or enforce the thought of the lesson. Pupils will readily commit them to memory by repeating them aloud a few times. When reviewing the lesson, call for these sentences.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JOHN HERALDS THE MIGHTY ONE

Beginning the Lesson

The chief officer in ancient Rome was the man who built the bridges, the pontifex. "There he sat enthroned above his fellows, the municipal commissioner of highways, to whom was committed the care of the streets and of the gates, and of the crossings of the river. It is worth while to remember this homely origin of the high word 'pontifical.' Whoever builds a road, exercises a pontifical function. When Ruskin desired to give his students an opportunity for social service, he took them out into the country close by Oxford to mend a road. It is said that they did not mend it very well, being unskilled in that art; but the endeavor was significantly right. It was a symbol of all ministry."

The first spiritual pontifex of New Testament times was John the Baptist. [Continue with Explanations and Comments.]

Other Preparers of the Way

We are not to suppose that John was the only one who prepared the way. In a very deep and real sense all history prepared the way for Jesus. The Jewish nation, with its unconquerable hope of a coming Redeemer; the Greek nation, with its incomparable language; the Roman nation, with its system of law and its unifying of the peoples—all prepared the way for Jesus. And the preparation that we see on the broad field of world history, we see still more clearly when we concentrate our attention on sacred history. What is the Old Testament? It is just a record of how God had been preparing the way. Begin in Genesis with the first promise of the "seed of the woman" who is to bruise the serpent's head, and read on till you come to Malachi with his announcement, "The Lord . . . shall suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3.1), and you will see how by means of prophet and psalmist and seer, God had been preparing the way. In this respect John only comes at the end of a long line.

And yet John was in a very special sense our Lord's forerunner. John's message was to the very same generation as that to which Christ preached. The men who flocked to John's baptism were the men who subsequently listened to Christ.—J. D. Jones, in The Gospel According to St. Mark.

How Did John Prepare the Way of Christ?

By preaching the baptism of repentance. John's preaching was terrible preaching.

Sin was his theme, and repentance his call, and by this terrible preaching he made straight the way of the Lord. It was sub-soil ploughing. He broke through the hard crust of conventionalism and self-righteousness, and made the ground of the heart soft and ready to receive the good seed of the Kingdom. And it is noticeable that it was from the ranks of those who had been baptized by John that our Lord gathered his first disciples. John had created within them a genuine sorrow for sin, an eager expectation of the Messiah, and so when Jesus appeared they were ready to leave all and follow him.—J. D. Jones.

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord for Yourself

There rests upon each one of us the obligation of courageously facing the measure of our own contribution to the task of preparing the way of the Lord. Are we personally fit to have fellowship with him? What of the thoughts of our hearts? What of the spirit of our homes? What of the ordering of our business? What of the habits of our lives? What of the character and quality of our interests? Are these such as unite in giving him that free invitation to "make our hearts his dwelling-place," to which he never fails to respond?—J. Stuart Holden.

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord for Others

When an electric railway was under contemplation the men who thought of building the line, in order to satisfy themselves as to the real nature of the obstacles to be overcome, went over the route personally with the greatest care. Now scaling rough and craggy bluffs, plunging into thick tangles of brush and dense undergrowth, now wading little streams of water and cutting away thickets which obstructed the view, now sighting back to some point of elevation, these men labored hard and faithfully to determine whether the route was one over which it would pay to build a railway.

Many times more difficult was the task set before John the Baptist. The way was rough and thorny. It led at last to prison and to death. Trials such as no one would be called upon to face in these days lay thick along his way. Yet through all he never shrank from the mission which had been given him to prepare the way of the Lord. Not once did he stop to ask whether it would pay or not. With him there was no question as to what was best to do about it. The divine command was upon him, and he went on unflinchingly to the end.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." So the word comes to every one of us today.

"What! Am I to do anything toward this work?"

Yes. If you know of a place in any household or in the heart of any man or woman where the way is hedged up with sin or with ignorance of the Father's will, there is something for you to do.

"But I am not strong enough to do anything worth while."

God never told one of his creatures to do a thing without giving him the strength and the grace to do it. The message is for even the smallest, the humblest, the weakest. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."—E. L. Vincent.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. What made John the Baptist a leader for his generation? See Chapter IX of The Crises of the Christ, by Campbell Morgan; Chapters II and III of The Life of Christ, by W. J. Dawson.

2. John was a voice; he got a hearing. Many a man starts out to be a real voice and ends by being a mere whisper, just because he gets to heeding the opinions of Pharisees and Sadducees—the great people of his day. John dared to strike at these people with the same directness with which he struck at the soldiers and the tax gatherers.—Francis J. McConnell.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the difference between the method of Jesus and that of the scribes? 2. What were the characteristics of demon possession? 3. What was demon possession? 4. What is our Church-school doing for the cure of disease here or in mission lands? 5. What is our class doing? 6. How can the healing work and spirit of Christ be promoted in our community?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JOHN PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

The great masters of painting have left us many beautiful pictures of "The Holy Family" in which Mary is holding the Infant Jesus and close beside her is the

little boy John, who became the Baptist. Sometimes John is represented as adoring the Christ-child, sometimes the Christ-child is holding out his hand to John, and often there is a small cross in John's hand.

We do not know that John the Baptist and Jesus played together as children, but probably their mothers were cousins, and perhaps this fancy of the great artists was not wrong. Today we have an account of the first meeting of John and Jesus as told in the Gospels.

Longfellow has given us the scene and words. The priest speaks:

Who art thou, O man of prayer!
In raiment of camel's hair,
Begirt with leathern thong,
That here in the wilderness,
With a cry as of one in distress,
Preachest unto this throng?
Art thou the Christ?

What answer did John make? When pressed to tell who he was, what did he say?

I am the voice of one
Crying in the wilderness alone:
Prepare ye the way of the Lord;
Make his paths straight
In the land that is desolate!

Where was the wilderness in which John was preaching and baptizing? What did he call upon the people to do?

Repent! repent! repent!
For the Kingdom of God is at hand,
And all the land
Full of the knowledge of the Lord shall be
As the waters cover the sea,
And encircle the continent!

Repent! repent! repent!
For lo, the hour appointed,
The hour so long foretold
By the prophets of old,
Of the coming of the Anointed,
The Messiah, the Paraclete,
The Desire of the Nations, is nigh!

How John Prepared the Way for Jesus

When the city officials of London wished to have a new street made through their city, although houses covered the site, they ordered them all removed. This new street is called Kingsway. When John the Baptist urged the people to make ready the way of the King of Kings, he meant that everything that would hinder his coming into men's hearts must be removed just as were those houses on the Kingsway. Dr. Walter Russell Bowie explains how John prepared the way for Jesus:

"When John the Baptist lived there were a great many people who had no road into their hearts which Jesus could come by. They were like people who live all shut in by the mountains, or with some deep valley in front of their houses which has no bridge across it, or with such a crooked road leading up to their door that no one could find the way. The mountains which were around them were the great, wrong things which they had done, and the valleys were the deep gulfs of the right things they would not do, and the crooked paths were the ugly, crooked thoughts which they would not make straight so that Jesus could find the way. But John the Baptist said, 'Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked paths shall be made straight.' And so he tried to help people to break down their sins, and to fill up the big valleys of carelessness and indifference, and to make their thoughts straight and true for Jesus to come to them. For all the people whom he helped it was just as though a new road had been built straight to their heart's door. Jesus came to them over that new road of good desires which John the Baptist had helped to build, and made lonesome people glad, and dull people happy, and sinful people good, because he had come."

How We May Prepare the Way for Jesus

Let us consider what it is that we desire to do. We may put it into a single sentence: We desire to bring our friend to the knowledge, and thus to the love of Jesus Christ, and so to allegiance to him. What will bring that about? Our own example will do a great deal. The fact that we are manifestly devoted to Jesus Christ, that we are not only regular in our attendance upon those services in which we are brought near to him, but are glad to go and honestly regret to stay away, that the will of Jesus Christ affects our will,—all this is of aggressive value. Though we do not say a word, it helps. Christianity on Sunday, with a lack of Christianity between Sundays, does not help. Devotion to the church, accompanied by selfishness at home, does not help. If we so live as to make it plain to those who know us that Jesus Christ is an ever-present strength and joy to us; if they see that he makes us considerate of others, cheerful under trials, patient in affliction, self-sacrificing, and having the spirit of service,—that helps immeasurably.

To bring our friend where he will hear about Jesus Christ is a way to effect our desire for him. We may not be able to say the word which we want to say; but in the church, where the Scriptures are read and the gospel is preached he may hear the word which he needs. If it were an appreciation for music which we wished to cultivate in him, we probably would not argue with him about the excellence of the works of the masters, we would take him to concerts, to as many concerts as we could get him to attend cheerfully. We would not urge him against his will, but we would very persistently invite him. We would not expect much at the beginning: he would probably say a great many times that he would never go again, and would revile music on general principles, but he would go if we kept after him, and by and by he would hear with his ears, and rejoice with his heart, and be converted musically. That is the right thing to do with the friend whom we would bring to an appreciation of religion. We will bring him at least to the service. He ought never to be compelled to come in, but the Christian in the house ought never to go to church on Sunday without inviting the member of the family who does not commonly go. That unwearying, cheerful invitation will accomplish much.—George Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

Young People's Society of Civil Engineers

Some years ago, during a Christian Endeavor convention in a large city, a conversation was overheard between two men who were discussing the probable meaning of the mystical letters "C. E." which appeared everywhere on banners, buttons, flags, and hatbands. After some argument it was decided that the convention that was in progress must be one of civil engineers.

What a suggestive phrase! Young People's Society of Civil Engineers—preparing the way of the Lord, making his paths straight! This is the chief business of young Christians today. The Kingdom of Christ on earth is coming, and it is our work to get the world ready for it—to build the road over which the King shall come into his Kingdom. He cannot come until a straight, clear path has been prepared, until all the chasms of prejudice and pride which separate people have been bridged by sympathy, and all the stumbling-blocks have been removed from before the feet of the weakest. Here is plenty of work for the engineers. May their hands be strong to do it!—Forward.

Sentence Sermons

"Help me, O God, this year to crown with beauty;
Within my thoughts to write thine own best will.
To thee anew I give myself for duty;
Take me, dear Lord, and all thy plans fulfil."

Every duty carried out, every righteous deed wrought, every kindness shown, every day rightly lived, improves the Royal Highway.

"We made ready the way of the Lord by walking ourselves in right paths."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where was Capernaum? 2. What do Lk. 4.16-27 and Acts 13.14-16 say about the services of a synagogue? 3. What was Simon's other name? 4. What does the word divers, verse 34, mean? 5. How did Jesus spend the Sabbath? 6. Commit to memory Heb. 4.15.

JESUS AND THE SICK

GOLDEN TEXT: He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. Mark 7.37

LESSON Mark 1.21-45 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.1-8

MARK 1.21 And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. 28 And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

29 And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her: 31 and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her. and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. 33 And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS AS A TEACHER, verses 21, 22. In New Testament times sacrifices were offered only in the temple at Jerusalem, but every town and village had its synagogue for worship, an institution which evidently had its origin during the Babylonian captivity. On a certain Sabbath day Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum (built by the centurion whose faith Jesus commended, Luke 7). In the synagogue worship, after the recitation of the *Schema* (Dt. 6.4-9; 11.13-21) and the offering of a prayer, a lesson was read from the Law (Pentateuch) and another one from the Prophets. It was customary for the chief ruler of the synagogue, who had charge of the services, to ask a distinguished visitor to read and explain the lessons. Upon this occasion he called upon Jesus for this service.

As the congregation listened to Jesus they were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. The scribes constantly cited some well-known rabbi as authority for their teaching: Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen," Jn. 3.11. As has been well said, there was no "perhaps" in the teaching of Jesus. Recall the phrase often repeated in the Sermon on the Mount, "I say unto you." "The highest praise for a scribe was that he resembled a cemented cistern which lost no drop of water put into it. He was bound never to teach otherwise than as he had been taught. Christ as a teacher was not a cistern, but a spring, clear, abundant and perennial."

"Men crave to know; they want certitude; they long to be sure. And to them Christ presents himself as the Truth, God's Everlasting Yea, the answer to all their questioning" (J. D. Jones).

"What amazed people in the teaching of Jesus was not that he spoke with an accent of independence, which echoed no school, but that he spoke with the vigor and direct intuition of a prophet, as one inspired by God. The impression he made was one of originality. He did not cite earlier cases, nor did he speak in inverted commas. He might base his teaching upon some lesson from the Old Testament, but his words had no anxious reference to rabbinic precedent or tradition. Here, men felt instinctively, was a new power.

"And yet historical research reveals a still more surprising feature, in the fact that he taught at all. Looking back upon the period with its current beliefs and expectations about a Messiah, we find this fact as remarkable as anything. Pious Jews had never anticipated such a rôle for their Messiah. Some expected that

he would be taught by God, but this meant no more than that such a royal scion of the Davidic dynasty would be inspired for the task of administration, equipped with wisdom to rule and rally the saints of Israel, mentally and morally competent to carry out the divine purpose of establishing the theocracy on earth. But there was not the slightest expectation of teaching; at most, he was expected to uphold the Torah. The fact that Jesus taught as he did is a new thing, and yet a thing taken for granted somehow by the New Testament historians" (James Moffatt).

II. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS OVER THE DEMONIAC, verses 23-28. In the synagogue was "a man with an unclean spirit," a demoniac. Shall we call him a man who was mildly insane? Had he been violent, he would not have been allowed in the synagogue. "What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene?" the man cried out. The use of the plural "we" may indicate the presence of several evil spirits, but if the man was insane, and believed himself possessed of an evil spirit, it would be natural for him to use the plural. "Art thou come to destroy us?" he continued. "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." "If the possession was not real, but imagined by the insane man, the confession was probably due to the man's instinctive sense that a person with supernatural powers was present, ready to heal him" (Dummelow).

"Foul things that lurk under stones burrow out of the light whenever you lift the covering. Spirits that love the darkness are hurt by the light. It is possible to recognize Jesus for what he is, and to hate him all the more."

Jesus rebuked him saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." The Greek word translated "hold thy peace" means literally "be muzzled," as if spoken to a beast. And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. Instead of "tearing him," the marginal rendering has "convulsively." The man uttered a cry, and was restored to sanity. "What is this? a new teaching! With authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him," thus the amazed people questioned one another. Jewish exorcists used various devices, but Jesus merely spoke and the demon-possessed was cured. And the fame of Jesus spread throughout Galilee. See The Historical Background for a discussion of demon-possession.

III. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS OVER DISEASE, verses 29-34. With his disciples James and John, Jesus went from the synagogue to the house of the brothers Simon (Peter) and Andrew. Here he was at once told that Peter's wife's mother (Tyndale's Version has the useful phrase *Simones motherelawe*) was ill with a fever. Fever is still a common trouble in the region about the Sea of Galilee. Jesus took the woman by the hand and raised her up; and the fever left her; the completeness of her cure being shown by the fact that she ministered unto them.

"The working of healing miracles cannot be explained; that is, we cannot tell how it is done. Sometimes the Gospels represent them as answers to the prayers of Jesus (Mk. 9.29; Jn. 11.42-44). They are works which the Father gives him to do. Sometimes they speak as if the healing power resided in him as electricity in a body charged with it; and as if it could be tapped by a believing touch, though not without his knowledge (Mk. 5.28, 29). Always it is a power personal to Jesus, not dependent on medicine or regimen; he heals by his own power, and also, as the Gospels often show us, at his own expense. The divinest saying about these miracles is Mt. 8.17—'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.' What it means is that the healings were works of love as well as of power" (James Denney).

"He 'took her by the hand, and lifted her up.' Mark is fond of telling of Christ's taking by the hand; as, for instance, the little child whom he set in the midst, the blind man whom he healed, the child with the dumb spirit. His touch has power. His grasp means sympathy, tenderness, identification of himself with us, the communication of upholding, restoring strength. It is a picture, in a small matter, of the very heart of the gospel. It is a lesson for all who would help their fellows, that they must not be too dainty to lay hold of the dirtiest hand, both metaphorically and literally, if they want their sympathy to be believed" (Alexander Maclaren).

At sunset, when the Sabbath was ended, it was deemed lawful to bring the sick to be healed, and then "all the city gathered together at the door" of Simon's house, and Jesus healed many that were afflicted with various diseases. After a strenuous day he did not rest, but spent himself in the service of others.

If we are striving to be in our measure like Christ in his infinite measure, we must cultivate the grace of sympathy. A basketful of practical help is worth more than a cartload of futile pity.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A man with an unclean spirit, verse 23. The Babylonians believed in demoniac possession, and they claimed to expel the demons by pouring oil over a pot filled with water and repeating a psalm as an incantation.

The African negro today believes that the world is peopled with ghosts and demons, and the important religious official of an African tribe is the magician who is their witch-doctor and medicine-man. "By various rites and spells he manages to get a spirit to come and dwell in some particular object—an antelope's horn, or a large snail-shell, or a roll of pineapple fiber. He attracts the spirit generally by putting some queer kind of nastiness inside the object so as to induce the spirit to come and take up its abode therein."

The unclean spirit, crying with a loud voice, verse 26. The demon was thought to get possession of a person, control his will, and speak through his voice. Such is still the belief of the common people of Palestine. While traveling in Palestine I once came upon a group of men near the site of ancient Bethel, who were shouting and waving large clubs at a man in the center of the group. At an opportune moment one of them dropped his club, and, rushing up behind the central figure caught his hands and tied them behind him. When I asked why the man was so treated, I was told that he possessed a demon. When such people become violent, they were beaten or tortured in some way in order to drive out the demon, and if this did not work a cure, the victims were driven from human habitations.—George A. Barton in Jesus of Nazareth.

Sick of a fever, verse 30. Such fevers of the malarial order are still prevalent around the Lake of Galilee, especially where there is decaying vegetation, or lowlying ground is being broken up. The patient suffers from dry, burning heat in the body, rapidly consuming the strength, accompanied by an intense headache, and often attended with delirium. When the fever breaks, the skin at once becomes soft and moist, the temperature drops, and the patient falls into a refreshing sleep. —G. M. Mackie.

The Talmud calls this trouble "the burning fever," and prescribes for it "a magical remedy, of which the principal part is to tie a knife, wholly of iron, by a braid of hair to a thornbush, and to repeat on successive days Exodus 3.2, 3, then 4, and finally 5, after which the bush is to be cut down, while a certain magical formula is pronounced." Turning from this direction concerning incantation to the account given by Mark, we seem to be going out of one world into another; and it is indeed passing from the world of superstition and magic, of darkness and misery and hopelessness, to the world of simplicity, life, health, and goodness.—E. B. Mason.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Temptation and the Calling of the Four Disciples

Mark 1.12-20. The temptation of Jesus immediately followed his baptism. The one was the key to the other; the one the cause, and the other the effect. It is singular that Mark gives none of the details of the temptation which Matthew and Luke record. Dr. A. E. Garvie finds the explanation in the supposition that Mark, whose interest was not biographical, was content with so brief a reference because the fuller story did not illustrate his theme—the majesty of Jesus as the Son of God in word and work.

Although Mark narrates the calling of the four disciples immediately after his allusion to the temptation, about a year must have elapsed between the two incidents, during which occurred the events narrated in the first four chapters of John's Gospel, which give a record of the early Judean ministry. Luke 4.14-31 gives the beginning of the Galilean ministry, rejection at Nazareth, and removal to Capernaum.

Demon-Possession

There are six cases of demon-possession described in detail in the Gospels: here in Mark 1, again in Mark 5, 7 and 9; and in Matthew 9 and 12. There is a reference in Luke 8.2 to the cure of Mary Magdalene, and there are general references to the cure of many demonized ones, as in verse 34 of our lesson text. Today we speak of such cases as epilepsy, insanity, deafness, dumbness, or nervous troubles.

Did Jesus share the beliefs of his time, or did he accommodate his words to the belief of the people about him, the more readily to effect his cures? "It may be that he did share their belief as to demon-possession, for if, as Christians believe, he was God incarnate, he was incarnated as a Man of the first century and not as a man of the twentieth century."

The National Association for the Advancement of Scientific Healing has among its objects these:—The promotion of a more scientific treatment of nervous disorders; to seek to prevent the development of insanity by early diagnosis and prompt treatment; to establish in New York a foundation, and later hospitals or centers throughout the country, for the study and treatment of nervous disorders.

One of its originators is authority for the statement that every fifteen years the nation spends $390,000,000 for the care of the adolescent insane alone, allowing only $200 a year for each patient, and that millions of our people suffer from nervous troubles that weaken their powers and tend to lead to breakdown, mental or physical. The purpose of the association is to bring to its institution specially trained physicians who know how to treat delicate mental maladies scientifically, to bring their highly specialized knowledge more clearly before the medical profession, and to ask the clergy to work more closely with the medical profession.

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman is frequently asked if there is room in the modern world for a doctrine of demonology, and his answer is: "Not in the sense understood in former days. It was generally held by Christians not only that diseases were the work of evil spirits, but also that thunder and lightning, eclipses of the sun and changes of the moon, hurricanes, floods, wars and other devastations came from the same source. The sciences of medicine, meteorology and astronomy; the study of agriculture and sanitation; the findings of psychology and psychotherapy, largely explain these calamities as due to natural causes. Yet no advance of knowledge can overlook the fact of evil in the world. Much that belief in demons implied is held by the modern man, who is aware of the allurement and deceptiveness of sin, the perils of temptation, the fatal consequences of rebellion against truth and purity. But these evils can be cast out by faith in God and in his sovereign control over the moral realm. Their physical developments yield to the skill of science, invention and discovery. The framework of demonology has vanished. What Lord Morley called 'the trying phenomena of sin' remains to be expelled by a living trust in divine love and in the growth of human intelligence."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The exact site of *Capernaum* is disputed, the modern Tell Hum and Khan Minyeh, two or three miles apart on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, having each its advocates for this honor. Jesus made the city of Capernaum his home during his public life, and in the Gospels various places in the city are mentioned, the synagogue, Peter's house, "his own house," "another house," Jairus' house, Simon the Pharisee's house, the place where toll was collected, by the lake, in the streets.

We must remember, as Dr. George Adam Smith reminds us, that this particularly exhausting day at Capernaum of which our lesson tells, when all the city was gathered to Jesus' door, and they brought unto him all that were sick and them that were possessed with devils, was spent by our Lord—like so much of his ministry—in a sultry and enervating climate, at the bottom of that deep trench in which the Sea of Galilee lies nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean. Yet after such a day in such a place, our Lord did not pass the whole of the following night in sleep; but in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"What is it to be a Christian, a Christ-follower, unless it is going about doing good?" Alice Freeman Palmer asked in a letter. "We ought to love everybody and make everybody love us. Then everything else is easy." And in speaking of her work among girls, she said, "I try to be a friend to them all, and put all that is truest, sweetest, sunniest and strongest that I can gather into their lives. While I teach them solid knowledge, I will give, too, all that the years have brought to my own soul. God help me to give what Christ gave—myself—and make myself worth something to somebody; teach me to love all as he has loved, for the sake of the infinite possibilities locked up in every human soul."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS' POWER TO MAKE WHOLE

Beginning the Lesson

In recounting the many deeds of mercy on that busy day in Capernaum, Matthew explains that sympathy was the ruling motive of Jesus, for Matthew sees in them a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy—Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases. For the individuals to whom he ministered the important fact was their healing, but for all the world since then the fact that matters is the proof of his intensely sympathetic heart.

"Have you ever noticed," Henry Drummond questions, "how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things? Run it over with that in view, and you will find that he spent a great proportion of his time simply in making people happy, in doing good turns to people." [Follow with Explanations and Comments.]

Himself Took Our Infirmities, and Bare Our Diseases

As Dr. G. D. Boardman observes, were we to judge the employment of Jesus by his recorded acts without reference to his sayings, we might well say that he followed the medical profession, for out of forty-five specifically narrated miracles which he wrought, thirty-six were miracles of restoration from sickness and death, to say nothing of the vast number of his other cures, of which we have no detailed mention.

When Matthew (8.17) applied to Jesus the words of Isaiah, he evidently had two great truths in mind. First, that healing of disease was not an incidental work of Jesus, performed by a casual word and a wave of the hand, but that it was a work of love and pity, performed only by an outlay of strength, the strength which is used by one who sympathizes with another's distress, puts himself in the other's place, and thus "bares his disease." Whittier sings:

> To thee our frail humanity,
> Its joys and pains, belong;
> The wrong of man to man on thee
> Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Matthew's other thought was that infirmities and diseases are symbolical of sin, that in healing them Jesus showed his power to heal sin. "He must be blind indeed," says Edersheim, "who sees not in this Christ the Light of the world; the Restorer of what sin has blighted; the Joy in our world's deep sorrow."

The Touch of Love

During the Civil War a young man received a wound which proved fatal. In the hospital he called so constantly in his delirium for his mother that the surgeon despatched a message for her; and she arrived as soon as trains could bring her. The surgeon informed her of her son's condition, hovering between life and death, and assured her that the excitement consequent upon his recogniznig her presence would take away any hope of his recovery that might remain. So, according to strict orders, she sat for two hours outside the door of the ward, having the couch on which her son tossed to and fro in her direct line of vision. At length she said to the surgeon as he passed: "I shall die if I remain here any longer. May I not go and take the place of the nurse, only doing what she does in the way of smoothing his pillow and wetting his lips; I promise you I shall do nothing to disclose to him who I am." On those conditions she was allowed to take the nurse's place, and she faithfully discharged her professional duties in a strictly professional manner until her boy, turning his face to the wall, uttered a deep groan, when she involuntarily placed her hand on his brow. Thereupon the sufferer cried, "Nurse, how like my mother's hand!"

The love of a mother's heart pulses in a mother's hand and endows it with the tenderest touch that mortals know among their kind. The dying boy could not but recognize it.

The Savior's touch was what it was because in his hand there throbbed the love of the eternal Father.—John Macmillan, in a Sermon.

Jesus' Boundless Compassion

What a view was that which Jesus Christ took of the multitudes! He saw the multitudes exactly as they were. It was a multitudinous helplessness. We see

throngs, and remark on the number; Christ saw multitudes, and remarked on their misery. Alas! there is no gathering of human beings that does not represent a gathered pain, a gathered helplessness; where two or three are gathered together there is at least one broken heart. The street looks well, it is filled with bunting and with festoons, with spring flowers or summer grandeur; but in many a house in that decorated street there is a broken heart. Jesus Christ did not see the bunting flying from the windows, he saw the hearts that were dying within the bosoms of human grief; he had compassion.—Joseph Parker.

The Ministry of Jesus Was Dynamic

When the first hearers of Jesus reported their first impression of his teaching, they turned with constant reiteration to the word *Power*. Twenty-five times in the first three Gospels, and in the most significant connections, this word appears. "The multitudes glorified God," says Matthew, "which had given such power unto men." "The Kingdom of God comes with power," says Luke. The ministry of Jesus was, in other words, dynamic; he spoke as one having authority; he had power to lay down his life and he had power to take it again. It is this quality which most commends Jesus Christ to a modern man. The ascetic habit of an ineffective saint, the self-centered concern with a personal salvation,—this which for thousands of the finest natures in the Middle Ages constituted the way of perfect discipleship,—the *vita religiosa* which could not be attained among the ordinary affairs of the working world,—cannot hope to command the loyalty of men who must work out the problems of their religious life in terms of citizenship. What they must have is not a willingness to abandon the world, but a power to redeem the world; not the gift of self-surrender only, but a way of victory; not a Leader who is a Lamb, but a Leader who is a Lion; and they turn with a new confidence to that dynamic quality in the teaching of Jesus which drew his first disciples from their boats, their tax-booths, and their homes with the irresistible call of spiritual power.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in The Religious Education of an American Citizen.

Taken by the Hand and Lifted Up

Faith is prophylactic. It is likewise therapeutic. In the event that disease attacks us, confidence in the presence of the Unseen Christ gives a sense of quiet strength that is the physician's best ally. It is not something that is to be set over against the work of the physician. It simply affords us an opportunity to co-operate with the physician in promoting our own recovery.

Last winter a physician's wife was very ill with influenza. On other occasions when she had been seriously sick, she had been a "good fighter." This time, however, her personal morale was completely broken down. It was a matter of indifference to her whether she recovered or not. One day she realized that she was not doing her part, and she began to pray a very childish but genuine prayer, "O God, give me 'pep,' give me 'pep.'" Around this idea she organized her spiritual resources, with the result that her strength began to return from that very hour. It was as though the living Christ had taken her by the hand and lifted her up.

Too long the Christian Church has disregarded the healing value of faith, leaving it to others to emphasize this truth. Let us understand that a vital Christian faith makes for health and long life, and we need not go elsewhere for what we can get at home.—James H. Beebe.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The opportunities which physicians and nurses have for showing the spirit of Christ. Modern institutions which represent that spirit: hospitals, free clinics, orphanages, asylums, institutional churches, charitable organizations, American Relief Work, etc.

2. What has Christianity to say about health and healing today? Does the task of physical healing belong to the Church? What more can be done to safeguard the health of our community?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Explain the reasoning in verses 9-12. 2. Why did Jesus say to the palsied man, "Thy sins are forgiven"? 3. How much trouble do you take for your friends? 4. What effort have you made to bring others to the Savior? 5. Who were the publicans, and why were they hated?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
JESUS SHOWS HIS SYMPATHY AND POWER

Beginning the Lesson

Musa was limping along the road. (Robert Erskine Campbell tells the complete story in The Holy Cross Magazine.) He presented a pathetic figure, bent nearly double, bandy-legged, leaning heavily on his staff. Although the sun shone brightly, he saw it not; and the breeze that springs up at the noontime brought no refreshment for him. Whither away? Surely a venerable old man like this had important business ahead of him, ere he would venture out on such a journey alone. Something more than ordinary must have sent its summons, to call him from his fireside and the well-known bed.

Savala struck the travel-worn Musa so forcibly,—though he could not tell just why,—that he tried to translate it all into music. He accordingly broke into a chant. Before he had finished his ditty quite a group of men in their big loose gowns, white and blue striped, had drifted in his direction. They stood in respectful curiosity to hear the aged stranger sing.

"Does any one know Tamba? Tamba, the medicine man?" the cripple asked suddenly.

"Tamba?" a dozen voices answered at once. "Oh, that's the medicine man. Yes, he is in town."

Many throats then called lustily for the person asked for, women and children, even, echoed his name till the village poultry and goats fled in terror at the unwonted din. Finally, the town doctor trotted up quite out of breath, and with an expectant look.

Musa had tried many doctors, and had spent all his substance on their magic. He had even eaten dirt, at their prescription, because, said they, dirt will draw the rocks, and this will straighten out the bones. For several months, too, he had worn a cruel log about his neck, for a certain one of the professionals had said that the devil living in his back could not dwell in the vicinity of such a heavy weight, and would surely flee at the very sight of such possible torture.

For long Musa had heard of this Tamba, but he lived far away, and, besides, he was somewhat uncertain of the fees of this renowned physician, and so had to wait till he could collect what he considered a suitable present—ten shillings.

Musa stated his case simply, while the gaping crowd made remarks to itself. Tamba looked very wise, but said nothing. After the old man had concluded, he produced a couple of shillings from the pocket of his big country gown, and offered these and the rooster he had carried so far. Tamba accepted the gift with fitting dignity. He left with word that he would have to consult his spiritual adviser, and asked the traveler to come to his house in the morning, for further conference.

Musa sat in a kind of daze as the great tropical night drew on apace. Tomorrow he would have help;—tomorrow!

"Five pounds. Not a copper less," was the price Tamba set on his services. "Yes," he continued, "this is a peculiar sort of devil that lives in the old man's back. I had a talk with him last night, and have arranged for him to leave. But the medicine will cost five pounds."

Musa was stupefied. He never had seen five pounds since the day he had paid that sum as the dowry for his one-eyed wife. He groaned inwardly. All his exalted frame of mind fell to earth with a crash.

And it was a sad figure that moved slowly down the hill on its return journey. He lived in a cold, gray mist of disappointment now, and for food and sleep had no thought. The long trip, and the keen disappointment combined to crush him. Although his town lay several days' journey beyond Savala, he walked night and day, without food or rest till he reached home. And then, he went to bed and died.

In Africa and elsewhere today there are many people just as forlorn and ignorant and superstitious as Musa, and there are so-called physicians as unscrupulous and wicked and fraudulent as Tamba.

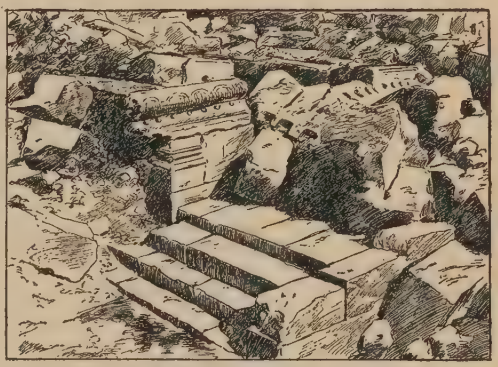
How differently Jesus the Great Physician treated the sick and afflicted who came to him for help! Our text tells us of his deeds on one special Sabbath which was spent like many of his days. Who was the first troubled one who came to him? What did Jesus do for him? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Jesus Shows His Sympathy and Power

Morning service in the synagogue was usually at nine o'clock. And people were

in time in those days. "Walk fast to church," said the Rabbis; "walk slowly home that you may have time to think."

I see the village people that morning on every path that led to the centurion's new white synagogue on the hill. Not very different except in dress were they from the people in our own day in any country town going to church. The farmers and fisherfolk are coming with their families. Old Zebedee is there, awkward in his Sabbath clothes, with his wife and his big sons James and John. Andrew is walking with Peter and his family, and probably the Master is walking with them. The streets are thronged and bright with color. The synagogue today will be crowded to the doors. For they know that the Stranger is sure to be in church, and it is the custom for the ruler of the synagogue to invite any prominent visitor to preach. Now they are in church.



Entrance to a Ruined Synagogue in Galilee of the Second or Third Century

When the Liturgy is over I see the minister approach the Ark and reverently take the roll of the Law and then the roll of the Prophets. And here I see the minister looking at the Visitor in Peter's seat, "Sir, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

Amid tense expectation he comes forward through the crowded church. He begins by reading the lesson from the Prophets. It would be very interesting to have a report of that sermon. Quite probably we have, if we only knew where to look for it. For we have in the Gospels many records of his sayings separate and disconnected without any note of time or place. For instance, Matthew, whose chief object was to collect "the sayings," seems to have gathered quite a number of them in the Sermon on the Mount. It is not at all likely that all the sayings in four long chapters of Matthew were said at one time. Long sermons were not his custom. As we look through these sections for that opening manifesto in Capernaum, we find there the identical words that Mark uses in this story of the Capernaum Church Service, "They were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes."

Jesus did not finish that sermon. For even as he spoke there arose a wild disturbance. There was a lunatic there, a demoniac, listening. The excitement was too much for his poor, clouded brain. *"Ea! Ea!* What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God!"

You can imagine the disturbance in that crowded church, the frightened women, the people springing to their feet. But as they look at Jesus they grow quiet at once. His calm, pitying eyes are on the poor, demented creature. Then came his words of stern authority, "Hold thy peace! Come out of him!"

"And when the unclean spirit had torn him and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed. What new thing is this? With authority he commandeth the unclean spirits and they obey him!"

The Sabbath is not over yet. It is an excited crowd that walked home from church that day, talking of the things which they had seen and heard. James and John are walking now with the Lord and with Peter. We learn from Jewish writers that in spite of their rigid Sabbatarian notions, what we should call "Sunday dinner" was a hospitable custom of the day. Apparently James and John were invited to dinner in Peter's house to meet the Master. So Jesus came home down the harbor road "to the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John."

But the Sunday dinner was not ready. The house was in confusion. The "great fever," the common scourge of that hot, low lakeside, had suddenly stricken the housekeeper, the mother of Peter's wife. The Master came in and laid his hand upon her "and immediately the fever left her and she arose and ministered unto them."

Then came the Sabbath evening rest, as much as people could rest on that exciting

day. The rules were very strict. There must be quiet everywhere until the setting of the Sabbath sun. But "at even when the sun was set" those in Peter's house could hear the beginning of hurried footsteps and the eager talking and the sounds of a gathering crowd, and when they looked out, behold, "the whole city was gathered together at the door." All over the strand, down to the waterside amongst the boats and the brown nets drying on the shore, were the fevered bodies lying on their mats, and the mother with her pining baby, and the rough man leading his blind boy, and here and there a demoniac held by strong hands. And Jesus in the doorway looking on it all.

A painful sight. Yes, but to him surely a touching, beautiful sight as well.

All through the Gospels the keen, tender, human sympathy of Christ for individual suffering people is emphasized. We are taught that he healed people at the cost of strain and loss to himself. "Somebody hath touched me," he said, when a woman surreptitiously touched him and was healed. "Somebody hath touched me, for I feel that strength is gone out from me." So as he moved amongst those afflicted ones his heart was sore for them. I see him stoop first to take up a sick baby in his arms while the sobbing mother kneels before him. And the blind and the halt stretch forth their hands. And the fevered patients are eagerly waiting their turn. And as he touched them into health he felt strength going out from him. So Matthew in telling this story gives a beautiful new meaning to the prophecy of Isaiah, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Matthew puts it thus, "He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He took them on himself and at his own cost healed them.

Surely he was tired that night.—Condensed from A People's Life of Christ, by J. Paterson-Smyth.

Live the Way You Pray

I knelt to pray when day was done,
And prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone;
Lift from each saddened heart the pain,
And let the sick be well again."
And then I woke another day
And carelessly went on my way.
The whole day long I did not try
To wipe a tear from any eye;
I did not try to share the load
Of any brother on my road;
I did not even go to see
The sick man just next door to me.
Yet once again when day was done
I prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone."
But as I prayed, into my ear
There came a voice that whispered clear:
"Pause, hypocrite, before you pray,
Whom have you tried to bless today?
God's sweetest blessings always go
By hands that serve him here below."
And then I hid my face, and cried,
"Forgive me, God, for I have lied;
Let me but see another day
And I will live the way I pray."—Whitney Montgomery

Sentence Sermons

"Pity is meant to impel to help."

Open the door of your heart, my friend,
Heedless of class or creed,
When you hear the cry of a brother's voice,
The sob of a child in need.—Edward Everett Hale.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Describe an Oriental house and its roof. 2. What traits of character did the four men show? 3. What is blasphemy? (See the dictionary.) 4. Why was the Savior called Jesus, according to Mt. 1.21? 5. What does 1 Tim. 1.15 say about the purpose of Jesus' life?

LESSON III—JANUARY 15

JESUS AND SINNERS

GOLDEN TEXT: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Mark 2.17

LESSON Mark 2.1-17 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32. 1, 2, 5-7, 10, 11

MARK 2.3 And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. 5 And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. 6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, *even* God? 8 And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), 11 I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. 12 And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

15 And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, *How is it* that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. AN INSTANCE OF PERSEVERING TRUTH, verses 3, 4. When Jesus returned to Capernaum and it became known that he was in the house, so great a crowd gathered that there was not room for more even about the door. Four men who had brought a palsied friend to Jesus, finding that they could not come near him, ascended with their burden to the roof. They made an opening through the roof and let the man down before the Great Physician.

If it was one of the better homes in Capernaum, there was a central courtyard in which the crowd gathered, and Jesus spoke to them from the gallery, or veranda, which extended around the wall of the house. In that case, it was the tiles of the roof over the veranda which were removed. If it was a poorer house, there was only one room, with an outside stairway leading to the roof, where in warm weather the family slept. The roof could be easily opened, or dug through, for it was almost flat, sloping only enough to let the rain run off, and was composed of mortar, tar, ashes, and sand rolled until hard. Sometimes the joists were covered with stone slabs, and if this was the case in Peter's home, the men had not only to dig through the earth but to pry up the slabs.

The bed was but a mattress, padded quilt, or blanket, and as the roof was low the four men could hold on to the corners and by stooping could let down the sick man without the aid of ropes (as are represented in most pictures of the event). Probably in bringing the man the bearers carried him and his "bed" upon a board, or stretcher.

The four men were persevering and they were inventive. Most men would have been discouraged by the crowd and satisfied that they had done all that could be done, would have carried the rich man home again. Could they be expected to do the impossible!

"If you find that one door is blocked, try another; and if no ordinary way is open, make a new and extraordinary way. Tear up the roof, make a new departure. Love is inventive, and enthusiasm is persistent" (Samuel Chadwick).

Jesus saw the great faith of the four men. Dr. A. B. Bruce speaks of this incident as illustrating the vicarious power of faith. It was not the faith of the sick man but of his friends that pleased the Great Physician.

"Faith is not sitting in quiet till God does all. Faith is the sure confidence that if Christ is not reached in one way he can be reached in another. Faith leads to spiritual resourcefulness" (F. J. McConnell).

To the palsied man Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." While Jesus was ever ready to heal the body, his great mission was to heal the spirit. His compassion for the palsied man was aroused, not so much for his diseased body as for his sin-sick soul. Many see in this man a case of disease caused by sin, but the narrative does not necessarily imply this. Jesus could read the heart, and he knew that this man was a sinner needing forgiveness. He had come to call sinners to repentance. "If we could have seen all we should probably have seen great light break across the patient's face with Christ's kindly word of forgiveness. The word meant the dawning of new hope. It meant that if physical healing came he would have courage to stand against the old temptations, and that if healing did not come he would be able to endure patiently the disease" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Look inward through the depths of thine own soul;
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?"—Lowell.

"Why doth this man thus speak?" certain scribes near Jesus reasoned in their hearts. "He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" To blaspheme means primarily to speak evil against God. Here the Jews accused Jesus of treating God impiously by claiming a prerogative that belonged only to God. If Jesus were not divine, his words were indeed blasphemous, since by claiming the right to exercise the divine prerogative, he claimed to be God.

Jesus read the hearts of these men, just as he read the hearts of the four friends of the sick man, verse 5. "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" Jesus questioned.

"What if all the speeches that are made in the inner chamber of the soul become audible, if they were heard in home and shop and church and marketplace! You know how we talk within ourselves and the things we say—how we characterize and judge and measure the people about us, marking them down or up according to our moods and feelings, or the dominant disposition of our hearts. It is wonderful what is going on within ourselves, and the proceedings of the silent Star Chamber really determine what we are. We fancy sometimes that no reporter gets in there, that all this Star Chamber talk is a profound secret, but we are very much mistaken. There is One who knows our thoughts before they clothe themselves in words that fall from our lips. If we appreciated this fact, I am sure that it would make us more careful as to what we say within ourselves" (Robert F. Coyle).

"Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" Jesus asked his critics. Both were equally easy *to say;* the effect of the latter saying was, for Jesus, the easier to prove. "Thus, to use a familiar illustration of our Lord's argument, it would be easier for a man equally ignorant of French and Chinese, to claim to know the latter than the former; not that the language itself is easier, but that, in the one case, multitudes could disprove his claim; and in the other, hardly a scholar or two in the land" (Trench).

That he had power to forgive sins Jesus could not prove on the spot, but that he had power to cure disease he could at once demonstrate. As Zigabenus said, "He made the visible power a testimony of the invisible" when he said, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee (the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

"Why was he to take up his bed? Because, as some one has beautifully said, there is to be no provision made for the relapse. Oh, how many of us have made that provision in the past! Yes, we will get up, but we will have the bed ready for the relapse. As far as you are able, make it impossible by the absoluteness of your surrender and consecration, ever to get back" (G. Campbell Morgan).

"Between the lines we can read a good deal about the part played by this patient, though he speaks not one word throughout the incident. We have seen that the very wistfulness of his face must have spoken to Jesus eloquently of sin and of longing for forgiveness. Now we see a moral heroism which in response to the command of Jesus sets the will in the direction of that which seems self-evidently impossible. 'How can I walk? How absurd the command!' If thoughts

like these had flashed through the consciousness of the paralytic we could have no great reason for surprise. The sick man put forth his power, however, and the healing came. The Master saw his faith, and the faith unlocked the healing forces in the life of the Master" (F. J. McConnell).

When the man took up his bed and walked forth before them all the amazed people glorified God saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." Among them were Pharisees and doctors of the law, Lk. 5.17.

"This incident has never been so pertinent as now. Institutional churches are good things, but the adjective is not so important as the noun. Today there are many even in the church who seem to think that if only every one could have good food, good sanitation and fresh air, they would be perfect. Would they? These things are enormously important, but if we turned all the churches into soup kitchens, would that transformation save the world? Jesus put first things first" (William Lyon Phelps).

II. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING, verses 15-17. On a certain day Jesus was eating in his house (in Matthew's house, Lk. 5.29), and eating with him and his disciples were many publicans and sinners. No one had anything good to say for publicans, for they were the tax-collectors for the Roman government. See Light from Oriental Life. Jesus understood moral derelicts, he saw in them souls worth saving. Not only did he talk with them but—the very climax of disregard of Pharisaic opinion—he sat at meat with them!

Scribes and Pharisees, who were not themselves guests but were looking on (see Light from Oriental Life), sought to make the disciples disaffected toward their Master by asking them, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" Seemingly the disciples did not know how to answer the attack; doubtless they themselves wondered at their Master's mingling with such company. Jesus answered for them. "With that mastery in controversy which continually excites our admiration, he did not dispute the character of the company he was in, though on other occasions he showed that there were truer hearts and more open-minded men outside than inside the conventional religious circles. He took his companions at the feast at a hostile valuation, and even so justified himself."

"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick," he said: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." [It is interesting to note that our words *whole, hale, health,* all come from the one Anglo-Saxon word *hal.*] The Pharisees deemed themselves whole. The force of Christ's argument is that as the physician labors among the sick, so the Physician of Souls must labor among sinners.

"In such a saying, under such circumstances, there is discoverable a gentle satire and a great compassion. These self-satisfied men, who will by no means consent to be counted among the sinners, are taken at their own valuation. They are whole, and so have no need of the Physician! They are righteous, and so do not require his call! And yet the deepest note is that of his compassion. He knew their sickness, and so was willing to heal them. He knew they were sinners, and so was calling them also" (G. Campbell Morgan).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Take up thy bed, verse 11. The bed was often merely the outer garment, and whatever its material, it could be easily rolled and carried. In wealthy homes mattresses filled with cotton were kept in an alcove built especially for them (the *yauka,* or bed closet, concealed by a curtain), and at night were thrown down upon an elevated platform.

Rolling a Bed

Many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus, verse 15. The right to collect taxes in each Roman province was sold by the Roman government to a citizen or group of citizens at Rome, and the latter farmed out the collecting to other Roman citizens, or to natives who cared more for the money than they did for public opinion. These tax-collectors were called publicans. They were hated and despised by the Jews, for not only were they

the agents of their foreign masters, the Roman government, but as a class they were dishonest and unscrupulous, extorting far more than the law required.

The One Volume Commentary quotes this saying: "A religious man who becomes a publican, is to be driven out of the society of religion. It is not lawful to use the riches of such men, of whom it is presumed that all their wealth was gotten by rapine, and that all their business was the business of extortion." Geikie, in his "Life of Christ," has this to say of publicans:

Carrying a Bed

"Cast out by the community, they too often justified the bad repute of their order, and lived in reckless dissipation and profligacy. To revenge themselves for the hatred shown them, their only thought, not seldom, was to make as much as they could from their office. The most shameless imposition at the receipt of custom, and the most hardened recklessness in the collection of excessive or fraudulent charges, became a daily occurrence. They repaid the war against themselves by a war against the community."

The scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, verse 16. To sit at table and eat with this despised class was to incur the height of "uncleanness." The Pharisees would ostentatiously step aside as if "to avoid breathing the air poisoned with the breath of the lost son of the House of Israel who had sold himself to a calling so infamous." Yet these scribes had not scrupled to enter the house of Matthew the publican, seat themselves on his matting, and freely engage in the conversation!

One of the chief virtues of the oriental is hospitableness, and in obedience to the demands of oriental hospitality he practically lives with open doors that all may enter at will. A picture of life in certain parts of Ireland in 1901 bears a strong resemblance to that in Palestine in the first century. A minister who came to our country as an Irish peasant and returned to the old country in that year to visit his father, gives us the picture.

"I hadn't been in the old home long before the alley was filled with neighbors, curious to have a look at 'ould James' son who was a clergyman.' I went to the door and shook hands with everybody in the hope that they would go away and leave me with my own. But nobody moved. They stood and stared for several hours. I finally dismissed them with this phrase, as I drifted easily into the vernacular, 'Shure we'd invite ye all to tay, but there's only three cups in the house.' We shut and barred the door when most of the neighbors left, and then many of them sat around the door outside to hear what they could."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Where was Capernaum? What events there has Mark already recorded?

The First Preaching Tour in Galilee

After the strenuous day at Capernaum (our lesson last week), Jesus sought retirement in a desert place, but when the disciples found him they told him that all were seeking him. "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns," then said Jesus, "that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." A leper, whom Jesus cured, published the wonderful cure and thus led so many to flock to the Great Physician that again he was obliged to leave the cities for the uninhabited spaces, yet there, too, "they came to him from every quarter." It was "after some days" that he again entered Capernaum, where our lesson begins.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The words of Jesus are *jeus d'esprit;* inevitably felicitous, yet as profoundly significant as if they were the result of years of reflection. "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." What a happy, spirited, convincing reply, and how pregnant its meaning! And so it is always. Jesus is never commonplace, never dull, never taken by surprise; always bright, always ready, always original, yet always simple. What is the meaning of this? Is it genius? Yes,

and something more. It points to a high habit of spiritual life. Jesus speaks thus because he lives always in the unclouded region of truth. We labor and blunder and struggle in utterance, because we live low down in the valley of moral commonplace.—A. B. Bruce.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS' POWER OVER SIN

Beginning the Lesson

As patients are carried into a certain hospital in the East, they may see a broad slab on which is written in letters of gold, "Have Faith in God." Within its walls human knowledge and skill do what they can to restore the sufferers to health and strength, but nothing could be accomplished without those healing forces which are divine. The friends who brought that paralytic to the Great Physician had faith in his healing power.

Dr. Jowett paints the scene as Mark brings it to us. There is the helpless paralytic, his face now and again revealing the faint flickering light of a glimmering hope. And here are the four friends, sympathetic, optimistic, perfectly assured, urging their way through the surging crowd. And here are certain of the scribes sitting in the house, cold, unemotional, jealous for the sustained authority of their own school. And in the midst of it all, the Master!

"What does he think about it?" Dr. Jowett asks. "What does he see? He sees the invisible. The merely material becomes unsubstantial, and the spiritual stands revealed. The picturesque setting melts away, and the unseen background of dispositions emerges into view. Bodies become transparencies, and the naked spirit stands unveiled. The Master sees the faith of the bearers. He sees the spiritual misery of the palsied. Here lies the man, a helpless log. The Master looks at him, through him, and, behold! another kind of paralysis is revealed. The man cannot command the activities of his own soul! His spiritual volition is impaired. His body is imprisoned in the palsy, his soul imprisoned in sin." And the Master heals both body and soul.

The Faith of the Four Friends

Jesus distinctly recognized the faith of the bearers as well as that of the sufferer who was borne. Humanly speaking, the palsied man owed his recovery and salvation to the faith and self-sacrifice of his four friends.

The great lesson comes out here that to an unknown extent it is possible to inspire and to bring about the salvation of others by our faith and co-operation. Our faith cannot supersede theirs, it is never a substitute for the faith of those more immediately concerned; but it prompts and strengthens their faith.

In many ways we all owe much to the confidence of others working on our behalf, and many of us are deeply conscious of the debt. For much that we are, viewed from an intellectual and worldly point of view, and for much that we have achieved in social and material life, we are indebted to the faith and encouragement of those about us.

The very best way in which we can serve our fellows is to get them to Christ; believing in him and in his power to save those who come to him, let us despair of no one. Let us imitate the courage of these bearers of the sick of the palsy. They dared much, and their boldness and aggressiveness carried the day.—W. L. Watkinson, in The Duty of Imperial Thinking.

Do We Bring Others into the Presence of Christ?

A notorious character called "Dick the Poacher" lived in a village where Dr. James Wells of Glasgow was visiting. One night the man came to Dr. Wells and asked him to return with him to his dying mother. On the way the minister said to him: "I am very glad to visit your dying mother, but you and I have to face death ourselves, and there is only one way of dying well. What do you think of these things yourself?"

"Can you tell me, sir, why nobody ever asked me that question before now?"

"Very likely you have been asked the question, but maybe you were not in a mood either to welcome it or to remember it."

"No, no, this is the first time any man ever asked me that serious question. The people here don't know me at all. They treat me as if I were a beast, and not a human being. It is now nearly twenty years since I was inside a church door. But never one of them once troubled his head about me, or came to my fireside

to ask why I had turned my back on the house of God. It's a fact, sir. If any decent neighbor had just reasoned with me a little, and invited me back, I think I would, maybe, have gone with the rest of them long ago, although no doubt I have been very careless. Often on the Sabbath I have sat at that window there, and watched the neighbors going up to the church with their nicely-dressed children, and I have often wondered how they never wanted me to go up with them. It has given me many a sore heart. That's surely not our Savior's way!"

Then, lifting up his arm, he added, with a quivering lip and a really touching tone: "O sir, I may well say with David: 'No man cares for my soul.'"

When Rabbi Duncan, the great Presbyterian professor of Hebrew, was dying in Edinburgh, some one told him there was a man in the infirmary whose language no one could speak. "I will learn it, I will learn it," said the dying scholar, "that I may tell him about the Savior."

"Have you ever felt a passion like that—a passionate longing to tell every sinner you meet about the Savior?" questions Dr. J. D. Jones in repeating the incident. "There is a world around us lying in darkness or in sin; have you ever gone forth to tell anyone in it about the Savior?"

"How many men have been saved because some one else did not lose faith—because fathers and mothers kept on praying, because brothers and sisters did not give up, because friends still continued bringing the palsied to the Savior! How truly are you being faithful in bringing your friends to the Savior?"

Jesus Came to Seek and Save the Lost

Gladstone explained the apparent decay of manhood in some men by saying that the people believed that there was "nothing in God to fear, and nothing in sin to worry about." Now the test of any man's system of philosophy or theology is his view of sin. Is sin stupidity? Remember, Judas was the brightest man of the twelve! Is sin ignorance? Aaron Burr was among the most brilliant of men. Is sin poverty, due to the garret and rags? Cleopatra lived in a palace, and Alcibiades had gold flowing like a river about him. Is the cure of sin culture? Then when the cistern is full of typhoid send for an artist to paint the pump in soft and harmonious colors. Why is the raindrop beautiful, and the dewdrop pure, and the rose red? Because each lives in harmony with itself. Why is the soul restless and discontented? Because of an inner schism. Who shall cleanse this red spot on Lady Macbeth's hand? What made the great poet say that the crimson drop would encarnadine the multitudinous seas, making the green one red? Gladstone was right. Superficial men find nothing in God to fear, and silly folk see nothing in sin to worry about.

Jesus told men the plain, unvarnished truth. He said that sin would little by little eat out the fiber of the soul and send the sinner to the rubbish heap of creation. He said plainly, I have come to redeem you from the power of sin and from the guilt of sin, leaving to nature the penalty of sin. Miraculous? Yes! What so pure as the snowflake falling in the street? What so black and foul as the snow in Broadway when stained by one hoof of horse and the soot of chimney? Who can make that black snow clean? God can. Tomorrow the sun will melt the snow, lift it into the cloud, and burn it with fire darts, flail it with wind, freshen it with cold, and on the morrow's morrow back shall come the fallen snowflake, white as the light itself. To men grown gray in contact with evil, to women discouraged and to boys whose hands have let the torch fall, came Jesus, whispering, "I come to seek and to save that which was lost." And so he led men back to faith, and breathed into their hearts a boundless hope, that they could not only hate what God hates eternally, but love what God loves and be forever like him.—From a Sermon by Newell Dwight Hillis.

Rebuked

The writer of the following poetry, Marian Warner Wildman, was led to her thought by seeing Hofmann's picture of Christ in a junk-shop window.

I walked, today, along a city street
So squalid, so unclean, my whole soul shrank,
Revolted, from foul sights and odors rank.
Naught could I see in those I chanced to meet
Save hard or sodden faces, shambling feet,
Eyes bleared with vice and liquor. My soul drank
The lees of loathing. Then it was—I thank

Who willed it!—that a Face, austere and sweet
And strong and pure had stopped me, like a hand
Laid gently on me. O'er that thoroughfare
Of wretchedness and sin they looked, those eyes
Of One who was too tender to despise
The least, or of the lowest to despair.
Rebuked, I passed. The Christ must understand.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Vicarious faith. See Chapter X of The Galilean Gospel, by A. B. Bruce.

2. The Healer of Souls. See Chapters V and VI of Bruce's Galilean Gospel; Chapter V of The Principles of Jesus, by Robert E. Speer; pages 126-128 of The Teaching of Christ, by G. C. Morgan.

3. The lesson for the social reformer that there is the deeper moral and spiritual problem back of the social problem.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did the disciples of John the Baptist fast? 2. Why did not the disciples of Jesus fast? 3. Explain 2.19. 4. Explain 2.21. 5. Explain 2.22. 6. What should be our attitude toward new religious truth? 7. Toward religious thought which we do not know whether it is true or false? 8. Why do we need the Sabbath? 9. What really makes a day of rest? 10. Would you like to have Sunday like the other days of the week? 11. If not, how ought we to make it different?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS

Beginning the Lesson

A medical missionary in India finds the road between his bungalow and the hospital often blocked by the sick brought for him to heal. As he hastens out at night to answer an urgent call, he stumbles over a figure lying in his doorway, and all along his way other sufferers have been left to await his coming. Many come to him from a distance of several hundred miles, and they expect him to cure in a day a disease of long-standing.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, the situation was similar. What does Mark say about it in the first and second verses of the second chapter? For what purpose did four men come where Jesus was? What made them believe that Jesus could cure their friend? [Describe the bed on which the man was carried, and picture the scene about the door. Describe an oriental house, outside stairway, roof, and the way those friends tore up the roof and let the sufferer down at the very feet of Jesus.]

The Story

Note the faith of that ambulance corps; they believed that Jesus could and would cure their friend, but they did not sit down afar and await his coming. They exerted their own efforts to the utmost to bring him to the Christ. "Trust in nothing but in Providence and your own efforts: never separate the two," counsels Dickens. These men did not separate the two.

Note the persistence of the four. They might well have been discouraged in finding a crowd so great and selfish, but they were of those men who Stanley says relish a task for its bigness and greet hard labor with fierce joy. No crowd could turn them back. They did the seemingly impossible thing. All great things ever done were once deemed impossible.

Note their resourcefulness. If they could not get the sick man before Jesus by the ordinary way they could by an extraordinary way. They were determined to find a way or make it. That is the spirit that "arrives." Great men never wait for opportunities; they make them. Bunyan had no writing paper in jail, but he untwisted the stoppers of the milk bottles and wrote his Pilgrim's Progress upon them. Faith is full of inventions.

What will Jesus say? It is a great moment, as these two men silently confront each other, the living embodiments of helplessness and of Power. The eyes of all are riveted on Jesus—the people with curious expectancy, the four friends with beating hearts and desperate hopes, the scribes with a scowl upon their faces and hatred in their hearts.

What will Jesus say? He was deeply cheered by the faith the friends had shown, and he would not let such faith go away disappointed. So, turning to the helpless man upon the couch, he said, "Courage, child!" He said more, but he began by saying that. And we can imagine how these two simple words, each in its own way, began to touch the springs of life and hope in the wasted body before him. The man, if a great sinner, may have been accustomed to words of reproach, or to that cold and shallow consolation which stings more keenly than reproach; and now he is told to take heart again. Here is One who speaks to him as if he believed in the possibility of his physical and spiritual recovery, One who appeals to his slumbering hope and heroism. And so tender an appeal, too! He calls him "Child." Many a year had passed since he had been anybody's "child"; and the tenderness of the Speaker no less than his first great, authoritative word, goes to the heart of the unhappy man. His inner world is transformed; a new life courses through his veins, and it will not be long till he will be upon his feet, and going upon his way rejoicing.—John Edgar McFayden, in The City with Foundations.

Another Faithful Four

Hilda Richmond has written an account of how a Church-school class was the means of bringing a crippled boy to the attention of a great surgeon who made it possible for him to arise and walk. They took turns in taking Jim for a ride on pleasant days, thus giving him the only chance he ever had of getting out of doors, for his people were poor and could not do much for him. After a time some of the children grew tired of the self-imposed task; it was too hot, Jim wanted to stay out too long, they had to give up too many things they wanted to do on those days, so with one excuse or another all but four stopped going for Jim.

One day a surgeon from a near-by city chanced to meet them. "Hello! young men! Let me lift that boy out of the wagon. I'm a doctor, and I'd like to see why he can't walk."

The great surgeon gently felt of the crippled limbs, asked Jim's name and where he lived, and then asked the boys where they lived. Soon the boys were telling him how their whole Sunday-school class had commenced the work, and now only four of them were keeping it up.

They thought no more about the strange man until a week later, when he drove up to Bill's house in a big automobile. "I've come to take Jim to a city hospital, if his mother is willing," the doctor explained, "and when he comes home I hardly think he will need his faithful teams any longer." Jim went back to the city with the great surgeon, and a few months later returned walking, well and strong.

Christ Is Still the Friend of Sinners

Everywhere we look, we see that power at work today. At a crowded meeting held in a large New York church the superintendent of the Rescue Mission, a tall, fine-looking man, was asked to speak. He told of the growth of the Mission, and of the work it tried to do, and then he closed with these words: "I was asked today as I came into this church, 'Have you ever seen a bad man become a good man?' Yes, my friends, I have. Sixteen years ago a man was leaning against a beer-barrel in a saloon in New York. His coat was in tatters. His shoes would hardly hold together. He had not a cent in his pocket or a friend in the world. He had broken his mother's heart, he had deserted his wife. No door was open to him—not even that of the hospital, for he was not sick, not that of the morgue, for he was not dead.

"Some one in the saloon said to him, 'You'd better go up to Forty-third Street. There's a mission up there that you might work for a night's lodging.' The man went, and reeled into the mission half-drunk. Before he went out again, twenty-four hours later, he had got hold of a hand that helped him to his feet. He had heard words of hope—of him who came to seek not the righteous, but sinners. He had taken new heart, and begun a new upward climb. All that was sixteen years ago. Some of you know that man today. All of you have heard him speak."

Then as the superintendent sat down the great audience realized that they had been told the result of Christ's forgiving power in the life of that superintendent himself, Samuel H. Hadley.

Sentence Sermons

A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health—it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for.—Carlyle.

Where sin abounds grace doth much more abound.—Paul.

JESUS AND THE LAW

GOLDEN TEXT: Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Matthew 5.17

LESSON Mark 2.18-22; 3.1-6 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.33-40

MARK 2.18 And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. 21 No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made. 22 And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but *they put* new wine into fresh wine-skins.

MARK 3.1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored. 6 And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE HIGHER LAW WHICH JESUS TAUGHT IN REGARD TO FASTING, 2.18-22. The law prescribed one day in the year—the Day of Atonement—for fasting, but two fast days a week were observed by the Pharisees (Lk. 18.12) and the disciples of John the Baptist. John's disciples, already jealous of the Teacher who was so much greater than their master (Jn. 3.26), and therefore willing tools of the Pharisees, came one day with the latter to Jesus and asked, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" For the significance of their fasting, see Light from Oriental Life. Their question was like our modern one, "We have always done thus and so; why don't you do it?" By their question they aimed to show how much more religious were the Pharisees and John's disciples than were Jesus and his disciples, and also to obtain an answer which would cause John the Baptist to repudiate Jesus, for they did not think it possible for Jesus to defend his disciples without condemning the Baptist.

The disciples of John went to Jesus' disciples and criticized Jesus, and to Jesus and criticized his disciples. Are we ever guilty of similar cowardly criticisms?

Jesus avoided the dilemma as skilfully as he did in the famous question about the tribute money. Fasting should be the expression of feeling rather than the observance of ritual, he told them when he said, "Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" The "sons of the bridechamber" were the friends of the bridegroom who escorted the bride and her companions to the home of the bridegroom and remained there for the wedding festivities, which often lasted a week. As Jesus uses the phrase, it refers to his disciples. The disciples of John must have remembered that it was their master who had called Jesus the bridegroom, Jn. 3.29. Dr. George A. Barton refers to the fact that the prophets Hosea and Ezekiel had spoken of God's covenant with Israel as a marriage covenant, and thinks that Jesus may have meant to suggest that he had come to establish a new covenant, and so figuratively claimed for his work the privileges of a wedding.

Jesus desires cheerful followers, who rejoice because of his presence with them. "The true child of God is a joyful creature of divine grace, who worships God with a face radiant with happiness."

"Jesus knew that he was misunderstood, and that he laid himself open to grave objections by refusing to lay stress on the outward rules, which the Pharisees and

the disciples of the Baptist thought so important. To him the heart of John's teaching was his call to repentance, his proclamation of the advent of the Kingdom of Heaven,—the camel's hair raiment and the leathern girdle and the food of locusts and wild honey were only incidentals, though they affected the popular imagination so much. Both the Pharisees and the people generally understood John, whether they were influenced or not. They understood the type of piety for which he was so eminent, but they stumbled at the carelessness for such external forms which Jesus displayed. They could not reconcile the high demands of holiness which he preached, with the sweet and sunny and natural life he lived" (Hugh Black).

"As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast," said Jesus. "But the days will come," he sorrowfully added, "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." At the end of the road he was traversing in opposition to the Pharisees stood the cross. "The principle of the answer is that men may fitly fast when the outward form is in keeping with a real and natural feeling, in some sad season of their life, or some solemn crisis; but he would not encourage any formal, forced, or unnatural rite, out of harmony with the simplicity and joy in which his disciples lived" (Hugh Black).

"Apart from its manifest hygienic merits, fasting has a spiritual significance which cannot be easily over-rated. Lent now is almost universally observed by Christians as the most suitable season for its practise. Its merits depend on its motives. Its discipline produces those more heroic spirits which the Church sorely needs in days of religious lassitude and indifference. Let each one be persuaded in his own mind concerning this practise" (S. Parkes Cadman).

In two parabolic sayings Jesus then defended the practise of both John the Baptist and himself against the attack of the Pharisees. "No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made." John the Baptist was right in having his disciples keep the old fasts: John belonged to Judaism, his teaching was the old piece of cloth added to the old garment. But what was needed was not an improved old garment, but a new one, a new life. Jesus' teaching was the new cloth which could not be patched on to the old garment. Just as the new, undressed cloth would shrink when wet and, being stronger than the old, would draw away from it and make a bigger rent, so the new truth patched on to the old would later make a greater gap. Fasting befitted the austere teaching of John; it was incongruous with the joyous character of the teaching of Jesus. The new glad order could not be combined with the old sad order.

Having defended the Baptist, Jesus next defended himself. "And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins; but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins." New wine might ferment and in a stiff, unyielding old wine-skin would burst the skin and would itself be spilled and lost. Jesus was right in not having his disciples observe the old fast days: his teaching was the new wine, and the old Judaism was not able to hold the new truths. "An illustration of this is to be seen in the comparison of Christianity as Christ taught it with the Judaism which it both fulfilled and for ever dispensed with. Had the design of a large section of the early Church been successful, and had Christianity been restricted in its expression to Judaistic forms and terms, its inherent life would have been destroyed. It was as new wine which needed new bottles, for its very nature was to expand even to universal limits. At Pentecost the new wine demanded new vessels, and a new church order was born. Likewise the Church of today must adjust her outer life to her inner impulse, or she cannot long continue to receive such impulse, or to hold her place in the world. Conservatism may, and often does, mean constriction; and while not undervaluing that which has acquired worth by reason of long service, and to which attaches a value of antiquity which anything modern cannot possibly have, it must not be forgotten that there is an imperiousness in the divine life which cannot suffer the bondage of the old order" (J. Stuart Holden).

"What strikes us so much in this and other conversations when our Lord is challenged, is not simply that he balked his adversaries. Others could do that. But, in addition, he invariably brought more truth and light and made it shine more brightly. With us controversy often muddies the water. In his hands it made the water only more clear" (R. C. Gillie).

II. THE HIGHER LAW WHICH JESUS TAUGHT IN REGARD TO THE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH, 3.1-5. On another Sabbath (Lk. 6.6) Jesus met a man in the synagogue with a withered hand. The scribes and Pharisees (Lk. 6.7) watched to see whether Jesus would cure the man on the Sabbath, for they sought an accusation to make against him. To the man Jesus said, "Stand forth," and then turning to the scribes and Pharisees he asked, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" According to the rabbinical rules, it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day only when life was in danger.

"Christian people are too prone to allow all the questioning to be done by their opponents. On this question of Sabbath observance we have the right to ask them: 'Do you seek to obliterate Sunday altogether? Or only to truncate it? What fragment of it, if any, do you propose to preserve?" (R. C. Gillie).

The form in which Jesus put his question is significant. "He states the issue as a decisive one. One must either do good or evil. One must either save life or kill. There is no middle course possible. To refrain from doing a possible good is to do positive harm. To hold aloof when there is an opportunity of service is to inflict an actual injury. It was characteristic of Jesus that he saw the alternatives of life in this clear-cut fashion. To him there were no border line cases. Compromise was entirely foreign alike to his nature and to his teaching. To us, weighing carefully all possibilities and considerations, it frequently, nay usually, seems that the margin of probability on the side of right is but a narrow one. Jesus weighed conflicting pros and cons not less accurately but more accurately than most of us, for his soul was nearer to God than ours often is, and he used a more delicately sensitive balance. To him with his sharp and emphatic moral vision, everything was either right or wrong, and with him there was no hesitancy when once the main question was decided" (Theodore H. Robinson).

The Pharisees were sullenly silent. As some one has aptly said, they were suffering from the shut mind. Jesus looked on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart. "The anger was for the hardening, the compassion for the hardness. His feelings in looking on sin were like a piece of woven stuff with a pattern on either side: on one the fiery threads—the wrath; on the other the silvery tints of sympathetic pity: a warp of wrath, a woof of sorrow" (Alexander Maclaren). "The face of Jesus at that moment reflected the eternal disposition of God towards all who make small proprieties everything, and the healing and redemption of the world nothing."

It is well to dwell a moment upon this first recorded instance of Jesus' anger. It was not personal resentment, it was righteous anger. There must be something wrong with a man or woman who is never angry. "Be ye angry, and sin not," counsels Paul. And the way to do this an ancient writer explains: "He that will be angry, but not sin, must be angry but for sin."

"Stretch forth thy hand," then Jesus said to the man whose hand was useless. And the man stretched it forth, and it was restored. Dr. George M. Mackie once asked a number of Jewish boys what they thought about this deed. One said the man's infirmity had likely been of long standing, and he could easily have waited one day more. Another said it would have saved trouble if Jesus had delayed the cure until the next day. Another said Jesus had not infringed the Sabbath law because the act of healing had not involved any manual operation. And then a blind boy ended the discussion by this question, "What would you have preferred if you had had the withered hand?"

"We should never put off doing a kindness. If it can be done at once, it must be done. No consideration, least of all those of ritual, must be allowed to come between us and the mute appeal of suffering. Whatever others say, let us be quick and brave to hold out a helping hand instantly to any one near us. Such is the true Sabbath spirit, as the Lord of the Sabbath taught it and practised it" (James Moffatt).

III. PLOTTING AGAINST JESUS, verse 6. The Pharisees were angry at being publicly put in the wrong, but what could they say? At any cost they would kill the Great Teacher whom they could not foil, and who was undermining their

authority. They therefore "straightway" joined the Herodians in seeking to find out how they could compass his death, although Pharisees and Herodians were not wont to have similar aims. The Herodians were strong supporters of the dynasty of Herod and the Pharisees were opposed to any foreign yoke. "The issue was thus clearly drawn between the religion of the Spirit, free to express itself at all times in deeds of necessity and mercy, taught by Jesus, and a religion that at times exalted rules above mercy and necessity, and permitted the dread hand of the past to torture and destroy the tender life of the present."

"The great principle which Jesus laid down seemed to them to destroy religion. In thinking thus they were no worse than many modern Christians. Men of every faith sometimes lose the substance both of religion and ethics in their eagerness to keep up time-honored rules and forms" (George A. Barton).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The disciples of the Pharisees fast, 2.18. It is necessary to see the facts through oriental eyes. To us in the West, fasting, the mere abstention from food, has comparatively little spiritual value. On the contrary, its principal effect on many of us is to produce a state of mind which it would be charitable to call irritability, and not untruthful to call bad temper. Experience has shown us that to our temperament (and it is a matter of temperament, and not of climate; the occidental finds fasting more dangerous spiritually in the East and in the tropics than in his own home) the practise is very far from being an elevating one. But that is not true of the East. To this day, in the great religions of the East it is true that to abstain from food does help a man to rise from the circle of material things and to concentrate on the spiritual. It is a practise which is almost universal in the East, amongst all forms of faith, though the great Moslem fast of the month Ramadan is the most obvious example. It is throughout the East one of the regular ways in which man draws near to God.—Theodore H. Robinson, in St. Mark's Life of Jesus.

Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 2.18. The thought back of the question is similar to that in Russia today where it is said men think themselves the chosen of God because they are forbidden to eat out of the same pot with others. When a peasant makes the sign of the cross on his stomach, he thinks that gives him the right to call another man a heathen who makes his cross over his breast.

Old Wine-Skins

Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? 2.19. With singing and playing on instruments the friends of the bridegroom conducted the bride and her companions to the house of the bridegroom, where they remained for a week of feasting and mirth. The Talmud absolved them even from prayer and worship during these festivities.

Old wine-skins, 2.22. The wine-skins in which wine was "bottled," were made of the entire skin of a goat. The skin was drawn off whole, and after being tanned with oak-bark, was hung by a fire to dry and be thoroughly seasoned with smoke. The neck of the animal formed the neck of the "bottle."

Whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, 3.2. The Sabbath day began with sunset on Friday and ended with sunset on Saturday, but as the disappearance of

the sun was the only mark of time, its commencement was different on a hill-top and in a valley. If it was cloudy, the going of the hens to roost was the signal. The beginning and the close of the Sabbath was announced by trumpet-blasts in Jerusalem and in the various towns.

No feature of the Jewish system was so marked as its extraordinary strictness in the outward observance of the Sabbath, as a day of entire rest. The scribes had elaborated, from the command of Moses, a vast array of prohibitions and injunctions, covering the whole of social, individual, and public life, and carried it to the extreme of ridiculous caricature. The quantity of food that might be carried on the Sabbath from one place to another was duly settled. It must be less in bulk than a dried fig; if of honey, only as much as would anoint a wound; if water, as much as would make eye-salve; if paper, as much as would be put in a phylactery; if ink, as much as would form two letters. All food must be prepared, all vessels washed, and all lights kindled, before sunset. The money girdle must be taken off, and all tools laid aside. "On Friday, before the beginning of the Sabbath," said one law, "no one must go out of his house with a needle or a pen, lest he forget to lay it aside before the Sabbath opens. Every one must search his pockets at that time, to see that there is nothing left in them with which it is forbidden to go out on the Sabbath."

In an insincere age such excessive instructions led to constant evasions by Pharisees and Sadducees alike. To escape the restrictions which limited a journey on the Sabbath to two thousand cubits from a town or city, they carried food on Friday evening to a spot that distance beyond the walls, and assumed by a fiction, that this made that spot also their dwelling. They could thus, on the Sabbath, walk the full distance to it, and an equal distance beyond it, this journey being only the legal distance from the fictitious place of residence!—Condensed from The Life of Christ, by Cunningham Geikie.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What fault did the Pharisees find with Jesus when he forgave the sins of the palsied man? When he ate with publicans and sinners?

Instances of Pharisaic Hostility to Jesus

When Jesus cured the palsied man and claimed to have the power to forgive sins, the open hostility of the Pharisees was aroused. His call of Matthew the publican as a disciple and his eating with publicans and sinners further antagonized them. They showed their hostility by their question about fasting, our first text in our lesson today. Then on the Sabbath at the Passover season in Jerusalem Jesus cured the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda and bade him carry his bed home, and Pharisees censured him for Sabbath-breaking (Jn. 5.1-17). Next, on his way back to Galilee he offended his enemies by allowing his disciples to pluck and rub together ears of grain and eat them on the Sabbath, and by curing on the Sabbath a man with a withered hand, our second text.

The Charge of Sabbath-breaking

Six times, either directly or indirectly, Jesus was accused of Sabbath-breaking. The Sabbath controversy was one of great importance in the eyes of the Pharisees. During the Jewish exile in Babylon, when sacrifices could no longer be offered in the temple, the strict keeping of the Sabbath became a chief part of the Jewish worship, and legislation multiplied in regard to the observance required. After all the centuries during which it was held that the keeping of the Sabbath was a rite pleasing in itself to God without regard to its effect on man, came Jesus declaring that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. He would not abolish the Sabbath, but he would abolish the legislation of the Pharisees in regard to the Sabbath, and this would undermine their influence over the people. Wherefore they took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

Mark says that after curing the man with the withered hand Jesus and his disciples "withdrew to the sea," hence we conclude that the place of the controversy with the Pharisees and of the miracle was somewhere about the Sea of Galilee.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The balance and sanity of the teaching of Jesus were never more manifest than in these two little parables (verses 21 and 22). They form an impregnable defense

of his apparent indifference to old ways and practises. At the same time they are sympathetic toward the people wedded to the past, yet that sympathy does not in any degree weaken his determination to bring in the new teaching which is so vital.

This is a perfect example of the defensive, the conciliatory, and the explanatory all in one. Would that all religious controversy had been conducted in the same spirit! Would that the revivalist had had more patience with the people who murmur, "The old is better." Would that the old-fashioned believer had been willing to lay aside the old formula, rather than stretch it till it cracked, to fit the new shape of the truth!—R. C. Gillie.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS DECLARES THE HIGHER LAW

Beginning the Lesson

The tendency of all governments is to exalt law above individual human interests. Jesus taught that men were greater than institutions. He made no protest against the rabbinical rules, false as they were; he merely exalted the interests of man, and laid down principles by which a man was to think for himself. And the rabbis knew that these principles would undermine their authority, just as the Pope knows that a Roman Catholic priest who says nothing against the Pope's power and authority nor against any part of the Roman ecclesiastical system, but who teaches his people to think for themselves, is nevertheless surely undermining that system.

The keeping of two fast days a week was deemed by the Pharisees a most important part of their religion. John the Baptist's disciples observed these fast days. The disciples of Jesus did not. How did Jesus answer the question of his enemies in regard to this omission? Explain his words about the new and old cloth. About the wine and wine-skins.

The Pharisees closely watched Jesus as he entered the synagogue one Sabbath. There was a man in the synagogue with a withered hand, and because it was the Sabbath they thought it unlawful for Jesus to heal him. What is the commandment which they strictly kept in regard to work on the Sabbath? It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day is the higher law of Jesus: how did he illustrate this? Explain his anger and grief.

"Why Do We Fast and They Fast Not?"

Thus we cry. But it is not because we think that fasting would be good for them—at the moment we evidently think it good for nobody; but because we are envying them their ease. We say our severe things not because our love of God is strong, but because for the time being we have lost our love of God. We condemn them simply because we have not their good fortune: and no good can ever come of it. Satan cannot cast out Satan.

Often it is this same sin and under the same disguise—envy under the cloak of zeal—when we suspect the religious life of others because it does not take the same direction, the same kind of expression as our own. It may be that our religious life is habitually burdensome and morose. This may be due to our temperament, or it may be one consequence of our earlier life having been self-indulgent and disorderly. Or it may be that we inherit a kind of shadow in our blood which makes our battle a peculiarly lonely one. But whatever be the reason, our religious life, the life which Christ seems to involve us in, is above all things severe, intense, full of cries out of the depths and answers from God that intoxicate. The sky, God's Face, for us holds many formidable clouds. When it is bright with us, it is very bright, and when it is dark, we are ready to die. "We fast oft."

That being our condition we look abroad upon the world of men. We see those who claim to share our faith. They trust the same love, they look for Salvation to the same cross. But how much happier they are than we! They seem to have entered the Christian life more easily than we found it possible, and to continue in it with less violence of feeling.

And the danger is that we begin to suspect that their devotion to Christ cannot be as real as ours. We find ourselves almost expecting them to break down, to fall away, because we think they have not entered by the strait gate or built their spiritual life upon the Rock.—John A. Hutton, in At Close Quarters.

The Law of Congruity

The principle that underlies our Lord's answer to the disciples of John and the Pharisees is the principle of appropriateness, the law of congruity. It was ridiculous, he said, to expect the sons of the bride chamber to fast in the wedding week. The outward must always be the expression of the inward, and there is absolutely no merit in the outward form unless the inward feeling is congruous with it.

Now fasting was originally just the expression of penitence and sorrow and abasement for sin. But with the Pharisee, fasting had become, for the most part, a matter of rule, a mere bit of routine. All this was offensive to Jesus. He insists upon the law of congruity. It is the principle James lays down when he says, "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise" (Jas. 5.13). It is equivalent to saying that the religious life must be absolutely single and true and sincere; that there must be about it no trace of hypocrisy or deceit.

This is a very searching rule, which has its pertinent modern applications. The act of worship, for instance, according to this law, is of little or no value in God's sight, unless it is the expression of a worshiping spirit. "Saying one's prayers" is a barren and profitless exercise, unless behind the uttered words there is the praying soul. Even participation in the Holy Communion will profit us nothing, unless it be the expression of a lively faith in Christ, and an entire consecration of ourselves to his service. The inward feeling must accompany the outward form. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19.14).—J. D. Jones, in The Gospel According to Mark.

Jesus Came Not to Destroy the Law, but to Fulfil

Paul says that the Law was meant to be outgrown, that it was only temporary, a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ. Judaism could not hold Christianity within itself. The new cloth is made into a new garment; new wine-skins are made to hold the new wine. Christianity could not be confined in the old forms. It outgrew them because its Founder fulfilled them in new and larger ways.

Ernest Bourner Allen, writing in The Adult Bible Class Monthly, recalls a similar figure of the Church Fathers which was probably borrowed from Jesus. They said truth was like water poured into a vessel. The vessels might change their form, but the water was the same. "There have been many changes in the style of vessels in five hundred or a thousand years," he comments; "water remains the same. Truth is eternal. It springs from the wells of God. It requires new and ever larger containers. We are no longer stating our conception of sin and of God in the terms Edwards used in his remarkable sermon on 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.' We are accepting the classic statement of Henry Ward Beecher: 'Every age has to make a new statement of moral facts in the light of the consciousness of that age. The old statements held good for their time. They satisfied the yearnings, they made the moral necessities of the aspiring souls of their day, but the world goes on, and new statements become indispensable.' I like that noble utterance in John Robinson's address to the Pilgrims when they left Holland: 'I am very confident the Lord has more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word.'

"Some important matters are involved in recognition of the fact that there is really new wine to be put into new bottles. The wine of new ideas is apt to make us uncomfortable. We get rather set in our own ideas and habits when along come new ideas, which may be better. When Lady Hester Stanhope introduced the practise of inoculation into England from the East, Walter Bagehot says, 'Conservative people were cross at the agony of the new idea.' There are still some people who get cross and others who get uncomfortable when new ideas are presented to them. There is no more difficult task than that of getting people to face new facts frankly and to act accordingly."

The True Attitude toward New Religious Thought

The true attitude is that of men of open mind, eager to learn, responsive to every whisper of truth, from whatever source it comes. Largely the business of life is to learn. God has not given us a finished universe whose mission and method are at once clear, but a world in the making, a great kingdom of truth and love in the germ, in which men groping and growing, stumbling and rising again, in that very process are to find themselves and to find their God. Conviction which closes the mind to new light is prejudice, and prejudice is the most fatal form of ignorance.

The Right Principle to Follow

Robert E. Speer gives us a good principle to observe in regard to many perplexing questions: "If we say, 'We will be satisfied with nothing except what would please Christ,' that may be a principle not always easy to apply, but it is a principle that will take care of everything in the long run, and will clear out of life a great mass of rubbish and save a great deal of questioning and debate."

Bible Class Discussion

1. Christian parents need to have an appreciation of the changed form in which young people express their Christian beliefs today, so that there shall be no misunderstanding between them. Sympathy on the part of both parent and child is necessary. Where there is a vital Christian experience, we need not be too insistent upon the form it will take.—Ernest Bourner Allen.

2. The miracle of the withered hand. See The Outlook for July 23, 1919.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What success has Jesus thus far attained? 2. Why did the people throng him? 3. How much attention did he give to the sick? 4. Should the church have any part in the relief of sickness today? 5. Where is the greatest suffering in the world today? 6. What is our church doing to help in the relief of this suffering?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW JESUS OBEYED THE LAW

Beginning the Lesson

In 1905 a vellum leaf with a dialogue written on both sides was found at Oxyrrhyncus, Egypt, which has been translated thus:

And he took them (his disciples) and brought them into the very place of purification, and was walking in the temple. And a certain Pharisee, a chief priest, met them and said to the Savior, "Who gave thee leave to walk in this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, when thou hast not washed nor yet have thy disciples bathed their feet?"

And the Savior straightway stood still with his disciples, and answered him, "Art thou, then, being here in the temple, clean?"

He saith unto him, "I am clean, for I washed in the pool of David, and I put on white and clean garments."

The Savior answered and said unto him, "Woe, ye blind who see not! Thou hast washed in these running waters, and hast cleansed and wiped the outside skin, but I and my disciples, who, thou sayest, have not bathed, have been dipped in the waters of eternal life."

This dialogue may not have occurred between Jesus and the Pharisees, but it gives an interesting sidelight on the complaint which the Pharisees did make because Jesus failed to keep a custom of theirs about fasting. What was the incident? [Follow with Explanations and Comments.]

Jesus Wants His Followers to be Happy

John the Baptist, you remember, lived in the wilderness far from the comfortable homes of his friends, wore only coarse, harsh camel's hair next to his skin, and had a very monotonous diet of locusts and honey. He was an austere man himself, and if he could have had his way all men would have been austere like him. There was no joy nor gladness in his preaching. His disciples thought that they must fast often, that in this way they would prove themselves very religious. Jesus was altogether different from John. He did not think it necessary to fast and be sad and gloomy. He came to make men happy.

"Innocent happiness," says an old French writer, "is my birthright, given to me by God. It is my right to keep it, and keep it I will by every means in my power."

"This is a reel splendid world," says Uncle Eben, Irving Bacheller's character: "this is a reel splendid world. God's fixed it up so ev'rybody can hev a good time if they'll only hev it. Once I heard uv a poor man 'at hed a bushel o' corn giv him. He looked up kind o' sad an' ast if they wouldn't pleas shell it. Then they tuk it away. God's gi'n us happiness in the ear, but he ain't a-goin' t' shell it fer us." Do you know any one who usually finds some flaw in whatever blessing comes to him?

Alice Freeman Palmer stood one hot summer day before a roomful of girls

from the tenement houses of Boston. "What shall I talk to you about this morning?" she asked. And one of them answered, "Tell us how to be happy." Tears rushed to Mrs. Palmer's eyes as she thought of the surroundings of that girl, dirty and foul-smelling, and of the burdens she had to bear. She gave them these three rules for being happy, and asked them to keep them for a week, not skipping a day:

"The first rule is that you will commit something to memory every day, something good. It need not be much, just a pretty bit of a poem, or a Bible verse.

"The second rule is: Look for something pretty every day, a leaf, a flower, a cloud—you can find something.

"The third rule is: Do something for somebody every day."

A week later Mrs. Palmer was walking through a narrow street when her arm was grabbed by a little girl, a tiny girl with the usual fat baby asleep in her arms. "I done it!" she exclaimed. "I never skipped a day, but it was awful hard. It was all right when I could go to the park, but one day it rained and rained, and the baby had a cold, and I just couldn't go out, and I thought I was going to skip, and I was standing at the window, most crying, and I saw"—here her face lighted up with a radiant smile—"I saw a sparrow taking a bath in the gutter that goes round the top of the house, and he had on a black necktie, and he was handsome!"

What Jesus Did for the Sabbath

In the bogs of Ireland people find now and then a golden ornament that fell there centuries ago from the mantle of some Celtic chieftain. It is found green and disfigured, so coated over that it has lost all beauty and appears wholly worthless. But when it is carefully cleaned, it is beautiful and valuable. The man who cleans it does so, not because he would destroy it, but because he would restore it.

With the act of such a man an English writer compares Jesus' treatment of the Sabbath. Jesus found the Sabbath so buried under many rules which man had made in regard to the way in which it should be kept that its true meaning and spirit had been hidden. With a firm but kindly hand Jesus removed these burdensome rules so that it might shine again in its own luster for the joy and blessing of the world.

Jesus taught that the Sabbath was God's good gift to man, and that, far from being a burden, it was one of God's greatest blessings, showing the Father's merciful consideration for his children's truest welfare. Let us not do anything on that day which will spoil the gift.

What It Is Lawful to Do on the Sabbath

It was Christ's habit to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath. How much more do we need the help and the inspiration to be gained from attending church services! Jesus filled his Sabbath with deeds of mercy. Are your Sundays all spent for self? Is there no one whom you can help or cheer on this day?

It is lawful for us to do good to ourselves and to others on the Sabbath Day. When you are in doubt whether a certain practise on that day might do yourself good, you may wisely test it by a rule which John Wesley's mother gave him when he was a young man at college, the rule by which he was to judge of what would be for him a lawful pleasure: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, that thing, to you, is sin."

Sentence Sermons

To spend the day in reading trash or in gossip, in immoderate eating and intemperate drinking, in the mood of ill will or sullen indifference, that is to break the Sabbath.—Charles Reynolds Brown.

Take the Sunday with you through the week,
And sweeten all the other days.—Longfellow.

The Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God.—M. D. Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. To what regions had the fame of Jesus spread? 2. Where was each? 3. What had taken place just before the crossing to Gennesaret, 6.53? 4. What does Acts 10.38 say about Jesus? 5. What can our class do to follow his example?

THE GROWING FAME OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: The common people heard him gladly. Mark 12.37

LESSON Mark 3.7-12; 6.53-56

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 60.1-5, 8, 9

MARK 3.7 And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judæa, 8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: 10 for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him. 11 And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he charged them much that they should not make him known.

MARK 6.53 And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. 54 And when they were come out of the boat, straightway *the people* knew him, 55 and ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. 56 And wheresoever he entered into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. WHY THE CROWD FOLLOWED JESUS, 3.7-12. Because of the hostility of scribes and Pharisees, Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the Sea of Galilee. The opposition of the religious authorities was growing, and at the same time Jesus was becoming increasingly popular with the masses. Great crowds followed him, for his fame had gone throughout the land. Crowds came from Galilee and from Jerusalem; from Idumea and beyond the Jordan; from the region of Tyre and Sidon. One day when the pressure upon him of the throng was great Jesus bade his disciples secure a boat in which he could take refuge. It was the fame of Jesus as a wonder-worker which drew them. They knew about his wonderful cures and many afflicted ones pressed upon him to touch him. Those afflicted with unclean spirits fell down before him crying, "Thou art the Son of God." He charged them not to make him known. Popular enthusiasm was dangerous for his cause; it might lead to an outbreak.

"What attracted the crowds? His power to heal? Yes. His sermons that were so easily understood? Yes. But above all it was himself. It was his personality. It was the Christ that attracted the people. And isn't it true today that where Christ is held up to the people, there we do find the crowds, and there we do find the Church taking her part in the life of the people?"

II. OTHER INSTANCES OF GREAT CROWDS FOLLOWING JESUS TO BE HEALED, 6.53.56. The second text of our lesson records the fame of Jesus when popular favor was at its height after the feeding of the five thousand and the return of Jesus and his disciples to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. After that miracle the multitude sought to make Jesus king, and on that account Jesus made his escape. No sooner, however, had his boat been moored on the western shore of the lake than the people in that region learned of his coming and "straightway" hastened to him with their sick. It was the same wherever he went. Whether in a great city, in a village, or in the country, the people laid the sick in the market places for him to cure.

"Jesus was the world's great wayside minister. He was always 'going about.' He went wherever people were. His outstanding ministries were by the wayside. Feeding hungry folk, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing, redeeming the lost, raising the dead, he touched his day and generation, and every day and generation, upon life's wayside. He went about the cities and villages. The congested areas of human life and the scattered hamlets alike, were within the range of his compassionate service. His three-fold mission was to preach, to teach, to serve. The church that names his name ought not to undertake to do more, and dare not do less. To herald the good news of God's love to men, to instruct them in the divine

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FISHERMEN MENDING THEIR NETS ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

truth, and to send them forth in paths of service, is the whole duty of the church. To bring men to the living Christ, that is evangelism; to build men up in Christ, that is true education; to send men forth with Christ, that is service" (W. J. Dawson).

The sick begged to touch even the hem of Christ's garment, and those who did so were made whole. "The modern method of interpreting the Gospel miracles has led some students to claim that an observance of our Lord's method of healing will show that the laws of suggestion were operative in his presence. A crowd affects the individual. Micklem says, 'From a psychological point of view, therefore, the reports of the healing of multitudes by our Lord do not present great difficulties.' "

"It was all as quick as the passing of an electric current at the touch of a finger, and this is being repeated in thousands of lives. People are drawn to Christ and by the faintest touch of faith they draw into their lives his healing and renewing power. His is still the joy of knowing that his power is being drawn off into human souls. And the power of Christ often comes to us through the medium of the lives of other men and women in whom he lives. We believe in them and touch their garments and are whole again; but, really, it is the Christ in them that we believe in, and it is Christ's power that we draw off from them into ourselves. And to every one in whom Christ lives comes this deep joy and repeated surprise of knowing from time to time that, in the throng and press, some one has touched him and been healed."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What instances of healing of the sick by Jesus has Mark recorded in his first two chapters? What instances of crowds following him?

The Popularity of Jesus

The Pharisees, as our previous lessons have shown, were growing more and more hostile to Jesus. At the same time the common people were thronging him in ever increasing numbers, hearing him gladly and seeking the benefit of his healing powers.

Judea was the southmost of the three provinces west of the Jordan River. *Idumea* was the region lying directly south of Judea. "Beyond the Jordan" was the territory called *Perea*. *Tyre* and *Sidon* were cities on the coast of Syria in the northwest.

Coin of Tyre

Gennesaret, where the disciples moored their boat, is the plain which extends along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee toward its northern end. From this plain the lake is sometimes called the Lake of Gennesaret. Josephus says of the plain: "Such is the fertility of the soil that it rejects no plant, and accordingly all are here cultivated by the husbandman, for so genial is the air that it suits every variety. Nature here nourishes fruits of opposite climes, and maintains a continual supply of them. Thus she produces the most royal of all, the grape and the fig, during ten months without intermission, while the other varieties ripen the year round."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

A young man on his return from college to his home town was asked by the superintendent to teach a class in the Church-school and declined. When the pastor spoke to him of his refusal, the young man lightly remarked, "There's no penalty for refusing, is there?" [The conversation is recorded in the Youth's Companion.]

"Yes," said the minister, "there is. There is the penalty of never knowing the good you have failed to do!"

"If I never know it," said George, still in his flippant mood, "I guess I won't miss it."

The minister then asked: "Do you remember this incident in the life of Jesus? Once when on his way to Jerusalem he sent two disciples to ask shelter at a Samaritan village; but as his face was set toward Jerusalem, they would not receive him. Certain of his disciples wanted to call down fire and brimstone on that village, but Jesus, reproving them, patiently resumed his journey. What was the penalty?"

"I don't think there was any," George replied. "As far as I can remember, nothing happened to the village."

"No," the minister agreed, "nothing happened. People put out their lights, and went to bed as usual; the next morning they rose as they always did. Nothing happened, indeed: no sick were healed, no new parable was spoken, no new disciple was found. Had any one of three things happened, the village would have had a place in history to the end of time; as things are, even its name is unknown."

For a moment George was silent; then he said, "I thank you for the reminder. I will teach that class."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE SECRET OF JESUS' FAME

Beginning the Lesson

It was not to be wondered at that multitudes gathered around the Master as bees to flowers, steel filings to the magnet, and the sick to the physician. A marvelous affinity existed between him and the need of men. There was no want in body, soul or spirit which he could not meet. With the power there was also easy accessibleness. He kept no big dogs at his gate, and there were no bolts on it. The gracious Inmate enjoyed the perpetual blessedness of giving. His measure was always full, pressed down, and running over.

Probably the crowds regarded him too exclusively as a great Miracle-Worker, ignoring the main object of his ministry; and for this reason he so constantly enjoined silence on those whom he healed. But still they came bringing their sick, and pressing upon him to touch but his garments. So great was the press, that their meals were impossible, and finally the little boat, which was attached to the bigger fishing smack, and was used for carrying out the circular nets, was requisitioned. "He healed many," crowding into eighteen months of ministry in the towns and villages of Galilee, wonders and signs which, with any other of his followers, would have been spread over a decade of years.—F. B. Meyer.

The Value of the Master's Ordinary Conduct

The value of his ordinary conduct has never been sufficiently stated nor regarded. The miracles have absorbed attention. Not everything he did was miraculous. He went about, not doing wonders all the time, but doing good all the time, and that was a wonder in itself. The striking and exceptional incidents, those that are by name and specific account in the record, rather blind us to the rest. The disciples must have been mightily impressed with the example of One who could do such things as his ordinary deeds and who would do such things right along. The power to raise the dead he did not often exercise. But the power to comfort, to cheer, to love, to help day by day, he exercised all the time. And that power he freely transmits. It is vastly better than the other both for his uses and for ours.

We have a craving to do the extraordinary, the wonderful, but the ability to do the ordinary is much more useful. We forget the climax in the old words: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Mounting up on wings like eagles is an experience that is, at best, only occasional as yet. Running is not a common habit with men and women. Walking is still the ordinary method of locomotion. Here is the true climax: that contact with God is worth while in the common experiences and needs of men. Grace is not valuable chiefly for its help in life's occasional and unusual hours. Divine occasionalism is not so rich as divine constancy.

Jesus was so lavish in the things he did. We are so prudent and careful. The parable of the Sower describes the miracle of his life. He went forth to sow and he sowed. He knew that "in great enterprises economy spells ruin and failure. To check expenditure is to trip up success." When the sowing begins you cannot

stop to count or to save wheat. He flung economy to the winds. It was not careful and prudent; perhaps it was not quite scientific. But Charles Kingsley called prudence "a nasty little virtue." This lavishness of our Master appeals to us as we watch it. He had the grand passion for men. He taught the multitudes and he healed them.—Condensed from In the School of Christ, by William Fraser McDowell.

The Fame of Jesus

We cannot get the pictures right of Jesus in Capernaum and throughout Galilee without sketching in always the background of multitudes. Always you feel the presence of the friendly crowds, the popularity of Jesus. It comes rather as a surprise. We think of him as despised and rejected of men. We have been so obsessed with the thought of the national rejection that we have not been noticing the crowd of simple, honest faces always about him, listening, liking and applauding.

Evidently he was immensely popular. Popularity was thrust upon him. Every page of the record has enthusiastic crowds around him. We read, "the multitude thronged him." "All men are seeking thee." "All the city was gathered together at the door." "They came to him from every quarter." "They ran to him from every city." "The people hung on him listening." "His mother and brethren could not come at him for the crowds." The woman with the issue of blood came behind him in the press. He had to feed five thousand men who followed him to the desert. A crowd was waiting beneath the Mount of Transfiguration. Crowds, enthusiastic crowds, pressed on him all the time. "So many coming and going that there was no leisure so much as to eat." He seemed to draw them like a magnet. They liked to be near him.

And this was not merely in the early Galilee days. It continued even in hostile Jerusalem. The people crowded the streets in the Palm Sunday procession. Next morning in the temple "all the people came near unto him." The Pharisees said, "If we let him alone all men will believe on him." And again, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing, behold the world is gone after him." Right to the end he was the popular Hero. The people championed him. He was always safe when they were about. When his enemies sought to seize him "they feared the people." "They said, not on the Feast Day lest there be an uproar among the people." True, there was a crowd who yelled, "Crucify him," but they were a packed jury persuaded by the priests to ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.—J. Paterson-Smyth, in A People's Life of Christ.

The Deep Compassion of Jesus for Every Human Need

It was out of compassion for the sinful, that he came; out of compassion for the ignorant, that he spoke; out of compassion for the sorrowful, that he wept; out of compassion for the wayward, that he rebuked; out of compassion for the sick, that he healed; out of compassion for the lost, that he died. A compassionate Christ is the Christ I need. It is my Master's infinitely tender compassion for my wants, for my infirmities, for my temptations, and for my griefs, that attracts me and binds me to him most.—G. H. Knight.

The Duty of Christ's Followers

It is the duty of the Christian to undertake the ministry of sympathy whenever there is an opportunity to exercise it, even to the evil and unthankworthy. This is his office because he is the minister and representative of Jesus, whose life was spent in sympathetic ministry. And the Christian is at such an advantage. He has consolation to offer in every case. There are many cases before which the unbeliever must remain dumb. But he who can offer the gospel of Jesus need never be dumb.

The wonderful thing about this power is that we all have it; not all in the same degree perhaps; but none of us is so lacking in this endowment as to be incapacitated for the ministry of sympathy. The feeling is in our hearts, but we may not have accustomed ourselves to utterance. We can easily give ourselves the needful training if we will. We do not need to wait for the accidents of life to make demands upon our sympathies, but may ourselves find the opportunities for their exercise.

It is well to have one or two lives to which we systematically minister. An old or ill person whom we regularly visit, a poor person into whose dreary life we bring a little warmth and brightness, a child whom we keep in constant touch with and guide as we may. Life is full of such opportunities of helpfulness, the fulfilment of which requires very little of time or money, yet which enable us to

increase the value of our lives to others, and, if that were the thing to consider, are in their reaction upon our own character, of unmeasured significance.—J. G. H. Barry.

A Friend of the People

I have an English friend who is minister of a great parish of poor folk. He is known throughout England as a friend of the people. He goes with them to the hospitals when they are sick, and to the police courts when they are in trouble; he eats with them in their houses which are sometimes so dirty he can hardly swallow the food; he lets them sleep in the church at night when the lodging houses are overcrowded; and he goes to the grave with them when they die. Three times they have offered him a bishopric. Three times he could have sat in the House of Lords. Three times he has refused. What is the House of Lords to him when he has his people and they need him? I am not sure what Jesus would think about bishops in the House of Lords, but I am sure what he would think about my friend.—Harry Emerson Fosdick, in a Sermon.

The Incidental Ministries

One of the fine things about doing good is that we never know how much we are doing. Influence is a subtle and pervasive power, which outruns at times any conscious recognition of its force on the part of the achieving agent. God blesses the husbandman's tree, but gives the birds hotel privileges in the branches. From the spreading branches hang nests in which young are hatched out—nor are these fowls in turn conscious of any debt to the farmer, while they eat up the worms that would destroy his crops. So the balance of nature is preserved, and ministry interlocks with ministry.

It is good to live and work in a world like this, always needing us, and likely in unguessed ways to profit morally by our consecration to duty. Let us grow our tree, and then listen indulgently to the birds as they fly around among the leaves singing a song of praise to their Creator, if not to us.—Zion's Herald.

Breadth of Sympathy

In "The High Calling," Dr. J. H. Jowett declares that the measure of our Christian growth may be estimated by the circles of our sympathetic interest. "What is the circumference of our outlook?" he questions. "Are my sympathies represented by my umbrella, and do they merely cover myself? Or are they something like a garden tent, and do they cover a family? Or are they like a great marquee, and can all the people in the village find shelter beneath its roof? Or still grander and nobler, do they find their symbol in the over-arching firmament, and do they embrace 'all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues'? What is the scope of my sympathetic circle? They tell us that the concentric rings in the interior fiber of a tree record its age and the story of its growth. And most sure I am that the concentric rings in the soul-interests of a Christian tell the story of his growth in grace."

But there must be depth as well as breadth of sympathy. George Eliot mourns over that "hopelessly shallow readiness which professes to appropriate the widest sympathies and has no pulse for the nearest."

For Bible Class Discussion

The relation of religion to health. The Federal Council of Churches in New York through its Department of Research and Education has made a study of this question together with doctors from the New York Academy of Medicine. At this writing the results of the study have not been published. It aimed to discover a practical means of co-operation of doctor, psychiatrist and minister, and methods of exposing the false "healing" carried on in many cities.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What grounds had the friends of Jesus for saying he was mad? 2. What similar instances of the attitude of friends in another's case can you recall? 3. What admission did the scribes make in their charge against Jesus? 4. How did Jesus prove that their charge was absurd? 5. How did Lincoln in a famous speech use the figure of a house divided against itself? 6. What do the names Satan and Beelzebub mean to you? 7. Mention several great men who have been called "beside themselves," or "mad," or "cranks."

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHY THE PEOPLE FOLLOWED JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

The common people, Mark tells us, heard Jesus gladly. Dr. W. J. Dawson tells us why in these beautiful stanzas:

For he healed their sick at even, and he cured the leper's sore,
And sinful men and women sinned no more,
And the world grew mirthful hearted, and forgot its misery
When the glory of the Lord was passing by.

Not in robes of purple splendor, but in lives that do his will,
In patient acts of kindness comes he still;
And the people cry with wonder, tho' no sign is in the sky,
That the glory of the Lord is passing by.

Jesus Went About Doing Good

Perhaps this, on the whole, is the best summary of our Lord's earthly ministry: he went about doing good (Acts 10.38). In the three years of his public ministry he was so busy that sometimes he had no time to take his food.

Great artists have almost fixed in our imagination the type of countenance which we now associate with Jesus: the central face of the Last Supper in Milan, for example, or Rembrandt's Jesus in the hundred guilder print, Healing the Sick, or Hoffmann's Jesus in the Temple, that exquisite face. But we have no authentic face of Jesus, and probably all artists err in giving to him a countenance too smooth and untroubled. His countenance must have borne the marks of anguish and care. For, as a man of genius said almost two hundred years ago, "When Christ was only thirty-two, those who saw him took him to be a man of fifty! (Thou art not yet fifty, Jn. 8.57)"—so much had life taken out of him.

No great work is ever done easily. There were places where, we read, he could do no work because of something wanting in the circumstances. Something wanting in the hearts of the people, wanting in the heart of the man for whom he was ready to do the great work. We read again that sometimes our Lord would groan in his spirit as though he were wrestling with some obstinate force which was pitting itself against his power. Nothing was done easily that Jesus did. It wore him out, so that again and again he retired to a mountain apart, there to lay open his soul to the energy of God.

He went about doing good. He looked about to see where good might be done. We sometimes excuse ourselves because we think we have done all the good that is clamantly necessary in the little place where we stand.

He went about doing good by his lips, by his hands, by himself. The biggest thing a man can do for his age or for the world is himself to be a good man and to give himself away for some great thought or dream of faith.—Condensed from an Address by John A. Hutton.

Who Qualifies?

He went about, they said,
In doing good:
He challenged men to follow,
If they would.

To give of cheer and faith,
Was his appeal;
To hearten; hope inspire;
The hurt to heal.

He knew no creed, nor system,
But to live
A life of loving service,
And to give:

Give thou of life and love:
Meet thou the test:
Bid them that love and serve
To join the quest.—Hiram B. Harrison.

Why the People Followed Jesus

I always keep posted up in my surgery, where sometimes the continuous stream of patients coming to see "the doctor" calls for more sympathy than I have to give, and is apt to make one irritable and useless because unsympathetic, these old words:

"He did kind things so kindly,
It seemed his heart's delight
To make poor people happy
From morning until night."—Wilfred T. Grenfell.

One Who Followed in Christ's Footsteps

At a meeting of Christian workers in Mexico one of them told stories to the boys. He told about a person who had helped the poor and whose whole life was spent for others. Then he asked the boys of whom he had been speaking. Of course he expected them to say, "Jesus," but with one voice they all cried out, "Miss Temple." Was not that a wonderful compliment for this Christian worker?

A Specialist in Sympathy

Dorothy suddenly straightened. "There now," she exclaimed, "I've had my little cry, and all is well! But what do people do who haven't an Aunt Agatha to pour things out to! Dear auntie, you have the very best brand of sympathy on the market!"

Her aunt laughed. "Well," she admitted, "I've been specializing in sympathy for over thirty years. Shall I tell you how it began? I was only twenty, and away from home, when a great unhappiness befell me. What it was is of no consequence now, but at the time I was very forlorn, and I wanted and needed sympathy very much. I could not go home, and there was no one in that big city for me to turn to. The people I was with were not unkind, but they were not quick to see when others were unhappy. I could not confide in them.

"Well, one day I sat down for a moment on a park bench, and not thinking that anyone was observing me, I cried a little. Suddenly a shadow fell across my lap, and looking up, I saw a lovely, gray-haired woman. She had the face of one to whom I could have poured out everything—a beautiful face.

" 'My dear,' she said, 'you are unhappy. I wish I had time to hear your troubles, but I am called to a sick friend, and must catch a train. I have only time to give you one word, but it contains all that I have learned from a deep experience of my own: The best thing for your own trouble is to comfort other people in their troubles.'

"She was carrying a bunch of roses, and as she left me she dropped a pink bud into my lap.

"I never saw her again, but when I got up from that bench and stuck her rosebud into my belt, all my thoughts had been given a right-about-face. I was then and there dedicated to the giving of sympathy instead of looking for it.

"So," she concluded with a laugh, "if you have an auntie who has a useful brand of sympathy, you owe her to that little old lady—to her word in season, her lovely smile, and her pink rosebuds."

She Could Not Heal but She Could Help

After a long siege of illness a man was making slow progress toward recovery. The strain of nursing had told seriously on his wife's strength. The weather was suffocatingly hot. One day Mrs. Poll, her Italian scrub-woman, said pityingly to the tired, anxious wife: "You look-a bad. You feel-a sick?" The next time Mrs. Poll came she said: "You look-a bad, why not tak-a him to the country?"

"Oh, Mrs. Poll, I can't afford it. I haven't the money," was the answer.

The woman then said softly, pleadingly, "I have-a money in the bank."

"The hand which I seized was coarse and hard-working, it was not even clean," said the tired wife in relating the incident, "but it seemed to me the most gracious hand in the world. What a pitiful little sum she had stored away I do not know, but if it had been millions it would not have been a greater offering. She seemed disappointed that I did not avail myself of her riches, and I could not make her understand she had given me something far above money."

Sentence Sermons

"No one can be a truly active Christian who does not give of himself to make others better."

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What does "He is beside himself" mean? 2. Why did his friends think Jesus was "beside himself"? 3. How did his brothers regard Jesus, as John tells us in Jn. 7.5? 4. Why did the Nazarenes refer to the family of Jesus, 6.3? 5. Why were they "offended in him"? 6. What is the meaning of the proverb of 6.4? 7. What proverbs have we which have the same meaning as that proverb? 8. How did Jesus meet misunderstanding and opposition?

JESUS MISUNDERSTOOD AND OPPOSED

GOLDEN TEXT: He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1.11, 12

LESSON Mark 3.19b-35; 6.1-6

MARK 3.19b And he cometh into a house. 20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. 22 And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons. 23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan hath risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 But no one can enter into the house of the strong *man,* and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong *man;* and then he will spoil his house.

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 50.4-9

MARK 6.1 And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and *what mean* such mighty works wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him. 4 And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. JESUS ACCUSED BY HIS FAMILY OF BEING OUT OF HIS MIND, 3.19b-21. So great was the crowd which tried to see and hear Jesus at his home in Capernaum that he and his disciples could find no opportunity even to eat. His friends became alarmed and tried to have him put under restraint. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," Jesus declares in Mt. 10.36. Recall Jn. 7.5: "For even his brethren did not believe in him."

"He is beside himself," he is out of his mind, his mind is unbalanced, they said. So Festus said of Paul: "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad" (Acts 26.24). This was one of the cruelest things which Jesus had to bear. His own friends, who should have spared him every distress possible and shown him every kindness in their power,—his own mother, brothers and sisters stabbed him to the heart with their unbelief and cruel explanation of his power.

"'What crack-brained fanatics!' was the remark the gentlemen of the eighteenth century made about Wesley and Whitfield. When Christian and Faithful refused even to look at the wares of Vanity Fair, but turned their eyes to heaven, what could the dwellers of the Fair, who regarded these wares as the only things worth having, think of them but that they were Bedlams and outlandish men? And when men like Henry Martyn in modern times let themselves 'burn out' for God, when they cheerfully sacrifice every hope of worldly wealth and fame, and think only of the soul and heaven and the unseen Christ, what can men who regard worldly wealth and pleasure and fame as the only things worth living for think of them, except that they are 'beside themselves'?" (J. D. Jones).

II. JESUS ACCUSED BY THE SCRIBES OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH BEELZEBUB, 3.22-27. The scribes had openly accused Jesus of blasphemy in declaring that he could forgive sins, of associating with publicans and sinners, of not keeping the fast days, of violating the Sabbath, and now they accused him of being in league with Beelzebub, or Satan. Being forced to acknowledge his power over demons, they declared that he must gain that power from the prince of demons.

Calling them to him, Jesus showed them the absurdity of their charge. "How can Satan cast out Satan?" he asked. Satan is the Hebrew word: from the Latin

word *diabolos* comes our word *devil.* Compare the proverb, "Hawks do not pick out hawks' eyes."

"A kingdom or a house divided against itself will not stand," Jesus continued. In his famous verbal duel with Stephen A. Douglas about slavery, Lincoln quoted these words of Jesus and then very appropriately added: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other." Lincoln's speech has been called "The House-Divided-Against-Itself Speech."

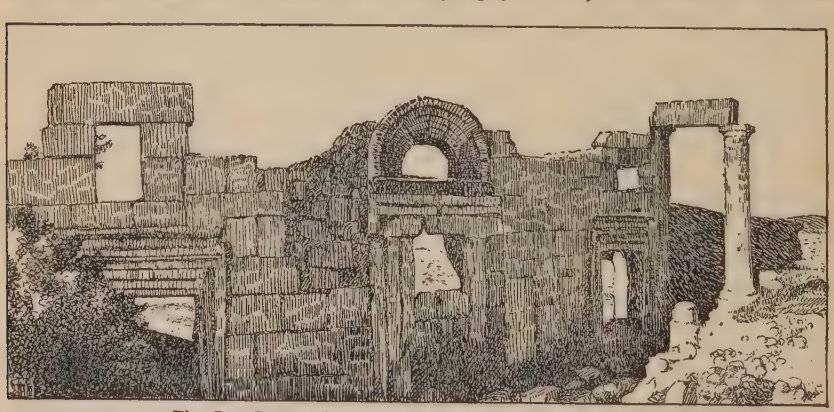
"A distressing creedal strife is shaking the ranks of the Protestant Christianity. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Small wonder that Christianity does not advance faster when the followers of the Master are warring among themselves with a bitterness that is pitiful when we consider the cause they all profess to serve" (Paul J. Cook).

Jesus continued his argument further: "If Satan were waging war with himself, he would perish. No one can enter a strong man's house and spoil his goods unless he has first bound the strong man." So he, Jesus, must first have bound Satan before he spoiled Satan's goods—before he cast out demons that possessed men.

While Jesus was absorbed in his work, his mother and his brothers came (verses 31-35) and, as if they had the right to interrupt him, sought to call him away. When Jesus was told that they were waiting, he said, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" and then, looking around on those about him, he added, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For he who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

As tender and close as is the relationship of mother and son, brother and sister, still tenderer and closer to Jesus is the spiritual relationship of those whose obedience to God's will makes them sons of God.

III. JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH, 6.1-6. Jesus arrived at Nazareth on one of his journeys, where he had lived until he began his public ministry. When the Sabbath came and he taught in the synagogue many who heard him were



The Best-Preserved of the Ancient Synagogues in Galilee

astonished. "Whence hath this man these sayings (these things)?" his townspeople exclaimed. "What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands?" They had known him from his youth up, they thought they knew all about him, and they could not understand how he could be so wise and powerful. "The more important people had known the humbleness of his home, and could not adjust themselves to looking up to him instead of down. His equals in age would find their boyish remembrances too strong for accepting him as a prophet. All of them did just what the most of us would have done, when they thought that the Man whom they had known so well, as they fancied, could not be a prophet, to say nothing of being the Messiah so long looked for."

"It is easy to blame them; but it is better to learn the warning in their words, and to take care that we are not blind to some true messenger of God just because we have been blessed with close companionship with him. Many a household has had to wait for death to take away the prophet before they discern him. Some of us entertain angels unawares, and have bitterly to feel, when too late, our eyes were holden that we should not know them" (Alexander Maclaren).

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James (afterwards the head of the church at Jerusalem), and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" the people of Nazareth asked. They had known him as a Carpenter; they could not think of him as a Prophet, much less as the Son of God. They were very human.

"People in these days try to account for a man by his ancestry and training. The Nazarenes did not talk as much as we do about heredity and environment, but obviously these things were in their mind, and they had some notion of their effect on life. But what they felt was that heredity and environment completely failed to account for Jesus. His relations were just plain, average, commonplace Jews. He had never been to college in Jerusalem. He had received the limited schooling a poor Jewish lad was wont to receive, and was then put to the carpenter's bench. And so Jesus was a problem to these Nazarenes. And it is still impossible to account for him on merely humanitarian grounds. How is it this Galilean peasant surpasses the greatest human intellects in the grasp of truth? How is it Christ has been able to do wonders in the way of salvation no human agency has ever been able to accomplish? Shut out his divinity, and Jesus becomes a stumbling-block" (J. D. Jones).

We have a proverb that says, Familiarity breeds contempt. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

"Somehow the senses get blunted to the beauty of the objects which we see around us every day; we lose the power to wonder and appreciate. Were there but one daisy in the field we would look on it with admiring interest. But because the fields are full of daisies, we forget that they are so beautiful, we discount their beauty at once under the contemptuous name of weed" (F. E. Dewhurst).

"One day Cicero found his way back to his native village, all eager and reminiscent, I suppose, and perchance a trifle vain. But I forgive him the vanity, especially when I read the confusion of his chagrin. I do not know what he expected, or what he had been planning to do. This is what he said: 'The world has a short memory.'" One day Jesus returned to his native village, joyously expecting there to do much for the people he knew and loved, but he could do no mighty work (save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folks and healed them), because of their unbelief at which he marveled. An orator is apt to fail when addressing an unsympathetic audience; a skillful musician seldom suceeds in bringing out of his instrument its finest effects amidst dull, unappreciative listeners. Genius is a shy, retiring spirit, which manifests itself only to faith and love. Even so with the miraculous healing power of Jesus. It existed independently of popular moods, even as does the oratorical power of the speaker and the musical talent of the performer, but it manifested itself only amid favoring circumstances" (A. B. Bruce).

"Unbelief is twain. There is the unbelief of the head and there is the unbelief of the hand. It is the latter of which I am most afraid. The world might get on with less orthodox belief than it now boasts if God's children were more proficient in co-operative faith. God needs partners more than he needs anything else. I think he would gladly put up with a hundred heresies concerning his Godhead and government if he could find us ready to help him rebuild the world. There is where we defeat him; we leave so much to him" (George Clarke Peck).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Beelzebub, 3.22. The name was probably derived from Baal-zebul, the Fly-god of Ekron (2 K. 12, 3, 6, 16), but there is doubt as to the reason for changing the

last letter and for applying the name to Satan. Flies are often so terrible a plague in the East that we need not be surprised to find one of the forms under which Baal was worshiped to be Baal-zebul, Baal of the fly, or Lord of the fly; the Septuagint makes it Baal-fly. So one of the Greek titles of Zeus (Jupiter) was "He who drives off the flies." It would be very natural for the later Jews to express their abhorrence of the Philistine idol by using his name for Satan. The change of the last letter may have been merely euphonic.—John A. Broadus, in Commentary on Matthew.

By the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons, 3.22. Dr. Geikie in His Life of Christ, suggests that the rabbis had no little gain from their exorcisms, and were jealous of Jesus' wonderful power over the "demon-possessed." They used, he says, adjurations, spells, and magic formulas, which were dangerously like the superstitions of the despised heathens. They laid stress on their knowledge of the secret names of God and the angels. To utter the cipher which stood for these, was in their belief to set in motion the divine and angelic powers themselves; and a whole science of the black art had been invented, defining how and for what ends they could be pressed into the service of their invoker, like the genii of the Arabian Nights into that of the magician. Possessing spells so mighty as they believed the secret names of the higher powers thus to be, the rabbis had created a vast science of magic as fantastic as that of medieval superstition, to bring these awful powers to bear on the mysteries of the future and the diseases and troubles of the present. Combinations of numbers of lines, or of letters based on them, were believed to put these powers at the service of the seer or the exorcist. Resistless talismans, protecting amulets, frightful curses, by which miracles could be wrought, the sick healed, and demons put to flight, were thus formed. Armed with a mystic text from the opening of Genesis or the visions of Ezekiel, or the secret name of God, or of some of the angels, or with secret, mysterious unions of letters, the rabbis who dealt in the dark arts had the power to draw the moon from the heaven, or to open the abysses of the earth!

Is not this the carpenter? 6.3. A man who made any article out of wood was called a carpenter. Justin Martyr, who lived close to the time of Christ, speaks of Jesus as the Maker of ploughs and yokes as well as of articles for the house. There is a tradition that Joseph, Mary's husband, died when Jesus was still a child, and that Mary and the younger members of her family depended upon the work of Jesus for their living.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What has been said against Jesus in the previous lessons of the year? What instances have we had of his being thronged by crowds?

Events Between Our Last Lesson and This

Immediately after his reference to the wide-spread fame of Jesus (our first text last week), Mark records the choosing of The Twelve. Matthew and Luke give us the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the centurion's servant and John the Baptist's last message; and Luke gives also the raising of the widow's son at Nain, the anointing of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and Christ's companions on his second preaching tour.

The Background of Mark 3.19-27

We have been told about some of the miracles which Jesus performed in Capernaum and caused a great stir in that city. We have seen how his infringement of the laws laid down by the rabbis in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath increased the excitement in regard to him. Evidently word of all this was sent to Jerusalem, and scribes came from that city to Capernaum to see what Jesus was doing. They came to criticize and to hinder his work. Even his friends could not understand him, and they sought to carry him off to some safe retreat as they would an insane man. "Conceive of that!" exclaims Dr. Maclaren, "the Incarnate Wisdom shielded by friends from the accusation that he is a demoniac by the apology that he is a lunatic!"

John (2.12) speaks of Jesus' mother and his brethren going with him from Nazareth to Capernaum. His sisters were probably married and settled in Nazareth, for the third verse of our second selection speaks of them as residing there.

The Background of Mark 6.1-6

This second rejection at Nazareth, another instance when Jesus was misunderstood and opposed, took place after the giving of the parables by the sea, the stilling of the tempest, the cure of the Gadarene demoniac, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the cure of the two blind men and the dumb demoniac (according to the harmony of the Gospels usually followed).

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Do you think any one would say of you that you were "beside yourself," because you made so much of your religion? We are all desperately afraid of enthusiasm today. It seems to me that it is the need of the Christian Church, and that we are not enthusiastic because we don't half believe the truths that we say are our creed.—Alexander Maclaren.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MISUNDERSTOOD JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

Have you ever thought how lonely Christ must have been? In the home at Nazareth where his people did not understand him, with the disciples who so constantly misunderstood him, among the throngs that pressed upon him for the sake of his help in their physical ills, he was a lonely man, "the loneliest man who ever walked this earth; the loneliest just because he was the best." The author of The Secret of the Son, J. Warschauer, has this to say about the lonely, misunderstood Christ:

"Blade of grass stands close to blade of grass, but peak is sundered from peak by miles of intervening valley; and here was One who towered above the rest, and was solitary accordingly. What but like can comprehend like? And since there was none like Jesus, who could comprehend him? He might bend down to their level; but could they rise to his? He might eat and drink with them; could they joy and sorrow with him? 'After all,' he must have asked himself—and the thought may have struck through him even while the multitudes were pressing round him—'who out of all these knows me? Who can share my innermost thought and feelings? Not one.' 'No one knoweth the Son—.' Yes, One, but no finite mind; God knew him, and only the Father could know him."

"The relation of Jesus to his own age and people," another writer reminds us, "presents the same problem as that of every man who is wiser and better than his contemporaries, only in a degree so much higher as Jesus' wisdom and goodness transcend all human talent and excellence. The penalty of greatness, especially of moral and religious genius, is loneliness, misunderstanding, distrust, hate, antagonism, persecution."

He Is Beside Himself

The most pathetic life in the history of the world is the life of the Lord Jesus. Those who study it find out, every day, a fresh sorrow. Before he came it was already foretold that he would be acquainted with grief, but no imagination had ever conceived the darkness of the reality.

We are confronted here with an episode in his life which had a bitterness all its own. It was not the way the world treated him; it was not the Pharisees; it was not something which came from his enemies; it was something his friends did. When he left the carpenter's shop and went out into the wider life, his friends were watching him. For some time back they had remarked a certain strangeness in his manner. He had always been strange among his brothers, but now this was growing upon him. He has said much stranger things of late, made many strange plans, gone away on curious errands to strange places. What did it mean? Where was it to end? Were the family to be responsible for all this eccentricity? One sad day it culminated. It was quite clear to them now. He was not responsible for what he was doing. It was his mind, alas! that had become affected. He was beside himself. In plain English, he was mad! It was his own mother, perhaps, and his brethren, who pointed this terrible finger at him; apologizing for him, entreating the people never to mind him, he was beside himself—he was mad.

Observe, from the world's standpoint, the charge is true. It is useless to denounce this as a libel, a bitter, blasphemous calumny. It is not so—it is true. There was

no alternative. Either he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, or he was beside himself. A holy life is always a phenomenon. The world knoweth it not. It is either supernatural or morbid.

For what is being beside oneself? What is madness? It is eccentricity—eccentr-icity—having a different center from other people.

Here is an engine with many moving wheels, large and small, cogged and plain, but each revolving upon a central axis, and describing a perfect circle. But at one side there is one small wheel which does not turn in a circle. Its motion is different from all the rest, and the changing curve it describes is unlike any ordinary line of the mathematician. The engineer tells you that this is the eccentric, because it has a peculiar center.

Now when Jesus Christ came among men he found them nearly all revolving in one circle. There was but one center to human life—self. Man's chief end was to glorify himself and enjoy himself for ever. By the whole gravitation of society, Jesus—as a Man—must have been drawn to the very verge of this vast vortex of self-indulgence. But he stepped back. He refused absolutely to be attracted. He put everything out of his life that had even a temptation in it to the world's center. He humbled himself—there is no place in the world's vortex for humbleness. He became of no reputation—nor for namelessness. He emptied himself—gravitation cannot act on emptiness. So the prince of this world came, but found nothing in him. He found nothing, because the true center of that life was not to be seen. It was with God. The unseen and the eternal moved him. He did not seek his own happiness, but that of others. He went about doing good. His object in going about was not gain, but to do good.

Now all this was very eccentric. It was living on new lines altogether. He did God's will. He pleased not himself. His center was to one side of self. He was beside himself. From the world's view-point it was simply madness.—Condensed from The Ideal Life, by Professor Henry Drummond.

Others Who Have Been Beside Themselves

Remember that charges like these, in all the various keys of contempt or of pity, or of fierce hostility, have been cast against all innovators, against every man that has broken a new path; against all teachers that have cut themselves apart from tradition and encrusted formulas; against every man that has waged war with the conventionalisms of society; against all idealists who have dreamed dreams and seen visions; against every man that has been touched with a lofty enthusiasm of any sort; and most of all, against all to whom God and their relations to him, the spiritual world and their relations to it, the future life and their relations to that, have become dominant forces and motives in their lives.—Alexander Maclaren.

The Unaccountable Man

When we see a man endowed with special and unique qualities, we always try to account for them. And we look for the secret of these extraordinary qualities chiefly to two things: (1) to a man's parentage, and (2) to a man's education. Again and again you may read in the biographies of great men sentences like these: "He inherited his strength of will from his father. He derived his gentleness of disposition from his mother." Mental as well as physical characteristics descend from parents to children, and heredity supplies the key to many a man's character.

Next only to parentage in importance in the formation of a man's character is education. And I use education in a broad sense, including not only the means at his disposal for the training of his mind, but also the influences, the political, social, religious, intellectual influences that have played upon a man in the formative years of his life. The age a man lives in; the ideals and aspirations of his time; the teachers he comes in contact with—all these things go a long way towards the make-up of his character. And the Nazarenes thought of these things as they listened to the Preacher that day.

But the more they thought about his parentage and upbringing the more astonished they became. There was nothing in his family history to account for his marvelous wisdom and power. His parents and his brothers and sisters were plain Galilean peasants. They were known to the audience. They possessed no shining or extraordinary qualities.

Nor was there anything in his education to account for it. For every one in the synagogue that day knew that Jesus had been bred in a carpenter's cottage, and had only received the education within reach of a peasant woman's son. He had never gone to Jerusalem—like Saul of Tarsus—to sit at the feet of Gamaliel or

some other learned rabbi. He had never gone, as we should say, to college or university. And yet here he was pouring out words of heavenly grace and wisdom such as they had never listened to before. And the Nazarenes were, I repeat, at their wits' end. They did not know what to make of it all. "Whence," they asked, "hath this Man this wisdom?" Jesus was to them a mystery, an enigma, a portent. He was an unaccountable Man.

The impression produced by Jesus upon the Nazarenes was exactly the same impression as that produced by him wherever he went. He struck every one as an extraordinary, unique, unaccountable Man. The general effect of the appearance of Christ was the creation of wonder and astonishment in the minds of those who saw and heard him. If you will take up your Gospels you will perhaps be surprised to find how often we are told that the people "marveled" or "wondered" or "were astonished" at something. It was not confined to any one class. Roman officials and great rabbis were every whit as much "astonished" as the simple and credulous peasants of Galilee.—J. D. Jones, in Paul's Certainties.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. There never was in idea started that woke up men out of their stupid indifference but its originator was spoken of as a crank.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

2. The masterful arguments of Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the Kingdom of God? 2. Explain verse 27. 3. What causes the growth of the seed? 4. What is the lesson of the parable of The Growing Grain? 5. You have been a Christian for many years; can you say that your spiritual life has made progress, that you have reached the stage of the "full corn in the ear"? 6. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Mustard Seed?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

FACING UNAVOIDABLE OPPOSITION

Beginning the Lesson

No one was able to understand Jesus during his earthly life. Perhaps Mary of Bethany understood him the best of any one, but neither she nor even his own mother fully understood him. "He was a perpetual enigma," as Dr. G. Campbell Morgan writes. "And for 1900 years the world has been trying to place him, trying to account for him, trying to understand him. There is a story of Napoleon, who one day was asked by his officers where he would place Jesus. His reply was: 'He cannot be placed; he is too big to be placed; you can only do one thing in his presence—bow the head in worship.'"

Misunderstood

It must have been one of the tragedies of the ministry of Jesus that his brethren did not understand him, and that not even his mother could share his great thoughts and plans. It is always painful to be misunderstood by those whom we love. For one who possessed the sensitive nature of Jesus, it must have been doubly distressing. It was not that they did not love him. On the contrary, it was just because they did love him, but could not understand the great mission in which he was engaged, that they wanted to stop his work. They could not bear to see him wear himself out on such a crowd, expending his energies for people who were nothing to them—people who might perhaps, be worthless and ungrateful.

It was a very natural feeling. We often misunderstand our relations and friends in similar ways, especially if they are greater or better than we are. Every young person who has felt himself or herself misunderstood can imagine a little of what Jesus suffered from this attitude of his mother and brothers. The intensity of their feeling led them to try to stop his work forcibly and take him home. They said, "He is beside himself." The word which the Greek Text attributes to them does not make them say that he was possessed of a demon: it is not quite so strong a word as that, though it borders upon the idea. It certainly does make them say that he was carried away by his eagerness and enthusiasm and was not manifesting good sense.—George A. Barton, in Jesus of Nazareth, a Biography.

A Prophet Is without Honor in his Own Country, and among his Own Kin, and in his Own House

The treatment which Jesus received from his fellow-townsmen recalls the treat-

ment meted out to an Old Testament prophet in his home town. Jeremiah was brought up at Anathoth, a little town where the priests lived. When the priests learned that he who was one of them had become a prophet, they threw stones at him in an attempt to kill him.

What did the people of Nazareth say about Jesus? Why were they "offended in him"? Some of them said, in the words of Dean Hodges, "These are bold sayings for a carpenter. Joseph's son is taking much upon himself." And they remembered how he had been one of them all his life long, Dean Hodges thinks, and some were his cousins, and some had held the ladder while he mended the wall, and some lived next door to his married sisters and did not like them very well, and some had hired him by the day to do their work.

It was all true to human nature. People are slow to believe great things of one whom they have known from childhood. Singularly enough, too, many feel a bit jealous when distinction comes to some one whom they know well. It is absurd that anyone should feel that honor accorded an acquaintance detracts from his own honor, yet that is the first impulsive thought of many a one who would not own the fact even to himself.

In a Chinese mission field two prophets were without honor in their own country recently. Two Chinese students wished to teach "the Jesus way," each in his own village, but in both places the people refused to hear them. "You are but a child," they said; "shame on you to try to instruct your elders." The two lived only fifteen miles apart, so they changed villages, and then each one was listened to with respect!

"Familiarity Breeds Contempt"

"No man is a hero to his own valet." "Far-away birds have fine feathers." These familiar proverbs tell the same truth as the one used by Jesus—"A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." "The farther off I am read from my own home, the better I am esteemed," Montaigne complained.

There is tradition among the peasants in Little Russia that the Archangel Michael descended from heaven at the time of the spring planting and abode among them so as to teach them the way to heaven. At first they scarcely dared look at him, so awe-inspiring was his presence. By the time the corn began to grow, they had become accustomed to him, but still obeyed him humbly. But when the corn was in blossom, they ceased to obey him; and when it had ripened, they drove him off with stones.

A writer in The Youth's Companion speaks of the chances, possibilities and forces which come into all our lives but are matters of course to us and we give them little or no heed, and asks:

"What if once a year a book were opened, the one book in the world that could show us authoritatively how to make the best of life, and that drew aside the veil beyond death? Would not men everywhere crowd to hear the oracle? Such a book may be found unheeded and unopened in many a house.

"What if we could pray to God but once in our lives? Think of the petitions, the half-desperate hope, the fear, the agony, crowded into that one petition. We can speak to him at any moment, and often forget to do it at all."

Opposed Because Different

The people of Dayton, Ohio, thought the Wright Brothers and their sister were crazy because they insisted upon trying to fly, and the newspapers of the city never mentioned them until after they had been flying over a pasture out in the suburbs for several weeks.

Samuel F. B. Morse was called a lunatic hundreds of times before he succeeded in getting Congress to aid him in establishing his telegraph line between Washington and Baltimore.

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell was considered a harmless madman with a useless toy when he exhibited the first telephone at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.

The only reason these men were considered crazy was because they were different from others. Their neighbors and friends believed that it could not be done while the geniuses insisted upon believing that it could be done.

The world's emancipators have all endured persecution for the crime of being different.—Roy L. Smith, in Four-Wheel Brakes.

Sentence Sermon

Sympathy is the condition of insight into character.—Alexander Maclaren.

JESUS PICTURES THE KINGDOM OF GOD

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Matthew 6.10

LESSON Mark 1.14, 15; 4.1-34 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 145.7-13

MARK 4.26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; 27 and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. 28 The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, 32 yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; 34 and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS SURE: IT DEPENDS UPON GOD, verses 26-29. A definition of the phrase, the Kingdom of God, can only be gleaned by studying the various ways in which Jesus used it. In his parables we learn that it has to do with man's spiritual natures and possibilities, his inner life. We might define it as the reign of God in the hearts of men: "The Kingdom of God is within you," said Jesus.

There is no geography in the Kingdom of God. On an ancient Syrian fragment the familiar words of Luke 1.33 read, "and to his kingdom there shall be no frontier": it is for all the world and for every creature. There is no chronology in the Kingdom of God: it is both present and future. As Alexander Maclaren writes: "It is present wherever wills bow to God; it is future as to complete realization, in a heaven from whence it comes and to which, like its King, it belongs even while on earth." In the earthly province of the Kingdom its subjects are fighting the good fight; in the heavenly province they have gained their crowns of righteousness.

A parable is a story told for the purpose of illustrating a truth. The parable of The Seed Growing Secretly, or of The Blade, the Ear, the Full Corn, as it is also sometimes called, portrays the slow but sure growth of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men. "So is the Kingdom of God," thus Jesus begins his parable. That is, what you see to be God's method of working in nature is also his method of working in the spiritual realm. So is the Kingdom of God, as if man should cast seed upon the earth (as Jesus and the Apostles and his later followers have implanted the word of God in men's hearts); and should sleep and rise night and day, that is, lead his customary life, leaving the result of the sowing with God; and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation," Jesus told the Pharisees.

In the words of Dr. Jowett, "The creation of a harvest is the work of a co-operative society. The farmer sows the seed, and the earth multiplies it. The man brings seed and earth into intimate relations, and then the invisible partners take the matter in hand, and transform the buried seed into waving corn. The invisible partners perfect the work which the farmer begins. They do what the farmer of himself could never do. Mystical powers take the seed from his hands, and carry his purpose to the desired fruition. As the unseen forces of the earth have much to do with the harvest, so there are unseen spiritual forces that are advancing the Kingdom of God."

"Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase."

In every one, however improbable it may seem in some cases, there is a spiritual nature capable of receiving and developing the Word. The great lesson of the parable is one of encouragement. The Sower is our Lord. The seed is the word of God. Wrapped up in that seed is a wonderful potency

which causes it to germinate in the soil of the mind of man. As the husbandman after he has done his part in preparing the ground and sowing the seed, then leaves it in the care of the earth, depending upon the earth, together with the action of sun and air and rain, to carry the germinating life through the stages of its growth, so man must trust to a Power that lies beyond him for results; for the extension of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men depends not only upon the agency of men but upon the power of God.

The earth beareth fruit of herself (in the original Greek the arrangement of the words is more emphatic.—Of herself the earth bringeth forth fruit); first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. As the growth of a plant is gradual, marked by successive stages, so is the growth of the spirit.

"First the blade, Jesus teaches, then the ear; but both for the sake of the grain which shall feed the hungry. The demand is not merely for a good life, but for a life that is good for something; growing that at last it may be fruitful. It is not the virtue one has attained nor the things one does not do which makes one a Christian. What hast thou done? What gain has God from his investment in thy soul; what fruit from thy sowing; what added strength or peace or courage, through the loan of life committed to thy care?" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.

"At length a small green feather
From the earth shot slowly upward,
Then another and another,
And before the summer ended
Stood the maize in all its beauty,
With its shining robes about it,
And its long, soft, yellow tresses.
And still later, when the autumn
Changed the long, green leaves to yellow,
And the soft and juicy kernels
Grew like wampum hard and yellow,
Then the ripened ears he gathered,
Stripped the withered husks from off them,
And made known unto the people
This new gift of the Great Spirit" (Longfellow).

II. THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS SURE: DESPISE NOT THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS, verses 30-32. Jesus next compared the growth of the Kingdom of God to that of a grain of mustard seed. The rabbis called the smallest possible quantity "the quantity of a grain of mustard." Though not the smallest seed known to botanical science (the seed of the lycopodium, one of the fern worts, is smaller), the mustard seed was the smallest seed known to Jews and was popularly regarded as the smallest of all seeds. Though so small, when it is sown and grows up it becomes greater than all the herbs, and puts out great branches, so that the birds can lodge under their shadow. Butterflies are not ordinarily very large, but in the northern part of New Guinea there are gigantic ones whose wings measure several feet in expanse, and the natives hunt them with bow and arrow; so the mustard plant is not usually of great size, but in Palestine it sometimes attains a height of ten or twelve feet. Rabbi Simeon speaks of a stalk of mustard in his field up which he was wont to climb as men are wont to climb into a fig tree.

"Whoever thinks of hoeing or weeding the mustard seed?" a native Chinese minister questioned his audience. When it has taken root it grows in spite of all obstacles, and the lesson he drew was that one need have no anxiety about the growth of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men after it has once taken root there, for it has power within itself to grow. He pointed out also that after the mustard seed had once entered a field, it is practically impossible to get it entirely out again. No matter how the mustard is rooted up, nor how the ground is ploughed and the crops are varied, the mustard will still appear somewhere. "So," he said, "the persecution we suffer and the troubles we endure cannot destroy the Kingdom of God within us."

"It is no doubt hard to believe in the Kingdom of God when so much in human events contradicts it. T. H. Green, the great historian, once said that one of the chief trials of life is its slowness. We all feel this in relation to the coming of the Kingdom of God, and all the more if our lives are passed in what has been called 'the steady drizzle of small inconveniences, discom-

A Grain of Mustard Seed, which a Man Sowed in his Field
(Copyright by Berger-Levrault & Co., 1908)

forts, annoyances, depressions, and despondencies.' But over the grayest day rises the height of the pure firmament, and we can learn to believe that the sun shines even though we do not see it. We do our daily duty in a high spirit of obedience and consecration. And if we do this the 'steady drizzle' will be pierced by the rainbow of a great hope, and our meanest duty will become rainbow-hued, because it will be done with a high intention to help forward God's Kingdom" (W. J. Dawson).

III. PARABLES WERE JESUS' METHOD OF CONVEYING TRUTH, verses 33, 34. And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it. His talk that day seems to have been made up of a succession of parables. He gave the parables of The Sower and of The Lamp before these two of the Silent Growth and The Mustard Seed, and the Gospel of Matthew records with these the parables of The Tares, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, and The Drag Net.

And without a parable spake he not unto them, Mark comments. "Our Lord does not seem to have made use of the acted parable, or of the bold poetical imagery of the old prophets. It was no part of his method to rouse excitement of any kind in the minds of his hearers. There is nothing, perhaps, which distinguishes his teaching from that of most popular preachers and teachers, even of the nobler sort, more sharply than its calmness and self-restraint. But his teaching was full of similes and parables. Indeed, Mark seems to say that his public teaching consisted mainly of those charming and homely little word-pictures drawn from the common life of the eastern peasantry, each of which was intended to illustrate some aspect of the good tidings which he came to impart. His favorite opening in public preaching seems to have been, 'The Kingdom of heaven is like' " (William Ralph Inge).

But privately to his own disciples Jesus expounded all things, Mark further adds. With the multitude he used the indirect method of the parable alone; with the disciples he used the direct method of explanation also. "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" the disciples once asked Jesus (Mt. 13.10), and he answered: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them

it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I unto them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

"In the parable there is a husk and a kernel, a body and a soul. Because of its double nature it had a double effect. As Matthew Henry puts it, 'A parable is a shell that keeps good fruit *for* the diligent, but keeps it *from* the slothful.' Those who came with honest hearts and seeking souls found in the parables great revelations of divine truth. The unspiritual heard a pretty tale and nothing more. So the parable, as Christ used it, became a method of judgment. It sifted the chaff from the wheat. It was Christ's fan, purging his floor. To some the parable was the savor of life unto life, and to others of death unto death" (J. D. Jones).

"It is good for us, when we have heard or read the Word, to examine ourselves, or to be examined, whether we have understood it or not" (Matthew Henry).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof, verse 32. In the proper season the traveler on Gennesaret may ride by mustard bushes as high as his horse, and alive with flocks of merry bulfinches or of rock-pigeons feeding upon the seeds.—W. H. Thomson, in The Parables by the Lake.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What people have heard Jesus gladly? Who have been unwilling to receive his message?

The Background of the Parables of Mark 4

On that day in Capernaum, after the episode of the coming of his mother and brethren (our last lesson), Jesus left the house and went to the Sea of Galilee. Entering a boat, he sat and talked to the crowd on the shore, telling them the parables which we call The Parables by the Seaside, or The Parables of the Kingdom. First among them was the parable of The Sower. The explanation of the parable was probably given to the disciples and others with Jesus in the boat. Then he seems to have turned to the waiting crowd on the shore and given them the parables of The Growing Seed, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, and The Tares. The first one, about the growing seed, is not told by any other Evangelist, and it is the only one which Mark alone tells.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

There is infinite encouragement and hope in these parables. We soon come to the end of our little resources, and we grieve that we see no visible results. But when that is so, remember that God never leaves the field. He never ceases his work, and under his fostering care the seed we scattered, unknown to us and unseen by us, is growing up. Where we never see it, faith is in existence. Where we never suspect it, it has often made considerable progress.

When I was at Lincoln I preached a sermon on Friendship, addressed especially to young men. I remember feeling particularly discouraged after preaching one day. I kept company with Elijah under the juniper tree, and felt that I had labored in vain. But since coming to Bournemouth I received a letter from Australia about that very sermon. And this is what it said. The writer was in Lincoln the Sunday I preached it. He was a complete stranger, and quite casually, or rather shall we say providentially, he turned into my old church. He went out to Australia immediately afterwards, and lived rather a rough and careless life; but the sermon he heard at Lincoln clung to him. In his wildest days, he said, he kept hearing the appeal to make a Friend of him who sticketh closer than a brother. And at last, six years after the sermon was preached, he gave himself to the Lord. Who would have thought of what was passing in the heart of that young fellow during these wild and careless years?

Let us be of good cheer. Let us scatter the seed. In the most solitary places, in the most stubborn and obstinate hearts, it grows and springs up we know not how.—J. D. Jones.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE GROWING KINGDOM OF GOD

Beginning the Lesson

In almost all teaching do we not proceed from the known to the unknown, from the familiar to the strange? If we want to describe something to one who has never seen it, we compare it with something that he has seen. Scarcely can we explain anything without saying that it is like something else. This is what a parable of Jesus does, it teaches a truth by pointing out how it resembles some well-known fact or thing. It makes truth clear, and makes it easily remembered. The Greek verb from which the noun *parable* is derived means literally *to place side by side,* hence *to compare:* a parable is a comparison. Webster defines it as a short, fictitious narrative of something which might easily occur in life or nature, by means of which a moral is drawn.

The parables of Jesus are unique. As Dr. George A. Barton says, Jesus transfigured the parables, for there is in them a delicacy of truth, a completeness, a brevity, and a complete literary appropriateness not found in the parables of others.

Even Dr. Joseph Klausner, the Jewish author of a life of Jesus of Nazareth, says of his parables: "Jesus is, for the Jewish nation, a great teacher of morality and an artist in parable. He is the moralist for whom in the religious life, morality counts as everything. In his ethical code there is a sublimity, distinctiveness, and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew ethical code; neither is there any parallel to the remarkable art of his parables." (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

We Must Have Patience

"It's not easy to state the case, Mr. Warner," said Ralph Horner. "Even before I joined the church I'd always lived a pretty straight, clean life, but as I read the New Testament it seemed to me that being a Christian would put something into my life that wasn't there before. That verse about being a 'new creature in Christ Jesus,' for example, appealed to me, and the promise of 'power from on high.' "

"And you haven't found it so." It surprised Ralph that Mr. Warner put this as a fact and not as a question.

"I can't exactly say that, but it hasn't been quite what I expected. I haven't shirked. I've tried my level best to keep close to God, and still I can't feel that I'm a 'new creature.' I can't see that there are new, strong forces in my life—outside myself, as you might say."

"I'm glad you came to me, Ralph," the minister said, shuffling the sheets of his unfinished sermon. "You've arrived at a critical point in your experience, a point where a good many Christians lose their grip and turn back. They set out, full of enthusiasm, and expect that everything is going to be done in a moment—or in a year. But that isn't God's way. God's best work, and man's best work, too, is done slowly. We must learn to wait. And that is one of the hardest of all hard lessons to learn.

"This beautiful world of ours has been a long, long time in building. If you and I could have looked at the result after a hundred years, say, or even a thousand years, we could hardly have believed that the finished product would be what it is. Perhaps we should have said what you said about yourself—that there wasn't much change from the original condition of things; nothing noticeable or striking, at all events.

"God has a great work on his hands when he undertakes to mold one of our poor, faltering, imperfect lives into what Paul calls 'a perfect man' shaped and fashioned and rounded out to the 'measure of the fullness of Christ.' It isn't an attenuated miniature God aims at. He makes the pattern lifesize—after Christ. Is it any wonder, Ralph, that it takes time and patience to get results? Is it any wonder that an eighteen-months-old Christian has even less to show of what he will be one day than an eighteen-months-old infant in arms? At best, the child may live fourscore years, but the 'new creature' you spoke of—the babe newborn in Christ—is being fashioned for eternity."

"You've helped me, Mr. Warner," Ralph exclaimed gratefully. "I ought to have seen that for myself. I've expected too much."

"Not too much, Ralph, but too soon," the minister amended, smiling.—The Youth's Companion.

David Livingstone's Resolve

I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in its relation to the Kingdom of Christ. If anything I have will advance the interest of that Kingdom it shall be given up or kept, as by keeping or giving it I shall most promote the glory of him to whom I owe all my hopes, both of time and eternity. May grace be given me to adhere to this.

The High Cost of Spiritual Growth

It costs more to worship God than it did a generation ago. The price has advanced. I am not forgetting the days when our early settlers walked through the fearsome forests and crossed the treacherous streams and made "with stern, impassioned stress" a thoroughfare to the meeting-house. That meeting-house was unheated; the minister turned the hour-glass. And yet the worship of the first day of the week was a delight and not a dread. There were no papers, no magazines, no lectures, no concerts, no operas, no plays; the weekly meeting provided the sweetest neighborly fellowship and the deepest intellectual and moral quickening; without it life would have been unspeakably drab. It did not cost a great deal to worship God in days when every social impulse drove one to the church doorway.

But now there are a hundred allurements, many of them richly rewarding. There are a score of enticing appeals every Sunday morning, and the fruits won by yielding to these appeals are not all low and sordid. For social quickening and mental stimulus we are no longer dependent upon the meeting-house. He who today habitually mingles his prayers and praises with his fellow-creatures does so because he has made a place in his life for worship, as one of the things by which he lives, without which he cannot see life steadily and see it whole. He pays the price for worship, a higher price than that paid by an earlier generation.

Not only public worship, but the elements which enter into worship are today bought at a most high price,—quiet and meditation. "Be still and know that I am God,"—but this is a noisy age and stillness is won at great cost. "Enter into thy closet,"—but this is the age of the highway; he who would "steal a while away" must make a trail, and trail-making is real work.

Faith was never to be had cheaply. Ours is a mechanical age. We think in mechanical patterns. The biological method has invaded the realm of psychology and the realm of religion. All things are studied in the light of their origins. A scientifically-minded age will explain everything in terms of cause and effect. The mind and the spirit of man are not counted as creative; man is a plaything in a mechanical order, rather than a creator of things wherein there is no breath, these things being the great determining factors in human evolution. But these are values no less real than the scientist's facts; and the man of faith declares that these things wherein there is no breath are supremely real.

The man of faith believes this,—at the cost of turning aside from the pathway of the mechanical and the external and removing the shoes from his feet as a pledge of his readiness to be persuaded by spiritual values not less than by physical facts.

The cost of hope has advanced. A few months ago I met a nurse in one of our hospitals; each morning as she entered the room she was radiant. "I think he may come today," she said, and this hope of the immediate return surely made her cheerful and patient. When I suggested that I was sure he was coming,—coming in ways and in a measure almost imperceptible, she seemed to think that my expectation was a hopeless one.

Here is the challenge: to be as vibrant with hope, as jubilantly confident of his coming, when we know that in no catastrophic, spectacular way will he come. It takes a finer courage far to say, despite the numberless and persistent efforts of men to retard his coming, "Yes, today his rule in the hearts of men will be a little more complete; his power over the nations will be a little more determinative." If we are not willing to pay this higher cost of hope, we shall be of those who declare that the present order is a fixed and inviolable one.

"Trusting God against appearances" is the cost of hope today. To be so confident that "the world is circling onward out of shadow into light" that it becomes one's daily determination to keep step with God, is the measure of the Christian's hope.

It costs more to pray than in earlier generations. There have been three prayer levels: that of magic-prayer, that of petition-prayer, and that of communion-prayer. On the lower levels, prayer is not costly. One must know the proper modes of conjuration and incantation; one must know definitely what he wants and be passionate in demanding it. That is all.

When men glimpsed the meaning of the omnipresence and the uniformity of natural law, and were not altogether sure that back of all natural phenomena was a personal and infinite Will, prayer began to cost and cost mightily. First, to be intent, not so much upon the clear definition of one's own desires, as to apprehend the nature and the scope of God's purpose; then, to make that apprehension of God's will the dominant desire of one's own heart,—all this entered into the purchase price of prayer.

He who knows the value of consecration-prayer no longer seeks or desires to change the will of God, that which includes in its majestic sweep the myriad human destinies and social forces, but every day endeavors to employ all his creative energies in the realization of God's hope. This often costs self-abnegation, self-effacement, but he who pays the cost knows that an understanding of the meaning of prayer is worth all its costs.

Are we willing to pay the cost of spiritual living? In the realm of things, advancing prices but slowly retard the determination of men to secure what they want. They will pay the price, will pay what they have to pay. Prices soar, and demands keep apace.

Is there the same passion for the things of the spirit? We ask to live by faith and hope and love. "Ye know not what ye ask," says Jesus. "Are ye able to pay the price?" We shall live by the spirit when, cost what it may, we accept the Master's ringing challenge with, "We are able to pay, to pay with the whole of us, will of us, brain of us, senses and soul of us!"—Condensed from a Sermon in The Congregationalist, by Henry S. McCready.

What Is Your Goal?

Is it necessary for any one to know in advance exactly how rich he may become in order to engage in the struggle for wealth? Is it necessary for one to know how far his political ambition will carry him before he enters upon public life? Did Dolbear know how far he could advance in electricity or Conkling in zoology, before they started on their careers? So, just because the spiritual is infinite, it is impossible to fix the goal of your growth. Paul does not define it, but says, "Press on unto perfection." This is why the Bible leaves the goal indefinite. "Till we all attain . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Christ makes our aim as infinite as God. "Be therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."

The specific direction for the realization of our ideals is found in Christ's command, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—J. W. Bashford, in "The Demand for Christ."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God. See Mt. 5.2-10; 6.10, 33; 8.11, 12; 13.3-52; 18.1-4; Mk. 4.26-29; Lk. 9.57-62; 13.18-21; 17.20, 21; Jn. 3.1-6; 4.19-26; 18.33-37.

2. What has been the progress of the Kingdom of God during the last decade?

3. The religion of the future. See article with this title by Dean Inge in The Atlantic Monthly, Feb. 1925.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Does the story of the stilling of the storm teach that Jesus will banish all trouble and danger from his followers who call to him? 2. What does it teach? 3. Do Christians display more freedom from fear and worry than do those who are not Christians? 4. Do you know anyone who believes in Christ until the storm comes? 5. Why was not the Gerasene demoniac put in an insane asylum? 6. How do you explain the immediate effect of Jesus' words upon the demoniac?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD GROWS

Beginning the Lesson

"What do you see, my child?" Ammi, an Indian sage, asked his son as he showed him the two halves of a seed. "I see a seed, father," the lad replied. "But what do you see in the seed?" "I see a small speck." "Ah, where you see nothing I see a great tree," declared the sage.

To the disciples of Jesus, the Kingdom that their Master was founding on the

earth looked like a small speck, but to the Great Teacher it appeared as a great tree whose branches would cover all lands and races.

What is the first parable by which Jesus showed his great faith in the growth of the Kingdom? Here is a little seed. Wrapped up in this seed is a potency which you cannot detect at all until the seed germinates. According to the law in its nature so mysterious to us, it sends forth a shoot, which becomes a stem with leaves, and by and by it has pushed upward till it has become a stalwart tree. How did Jesus use a seed as the basis of a parable? What do we call the parable? What is its lesson for us? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

The Earth Beareth Fruit of Herself

It is a simple picture which Jesus draws in the first parable of our lesson. The farmer sows his grain upon the well-tilled soil, and then waits, knowing that the earth will do her part and make fertile the seeds. Day after day passes, the field becomes green with tiny pennants which grow taller and heavier until they wave and ripple in the breezes, heavy with ears of grain which ripen for the harvest. God has given the increase.

So is the Kingdom of God, said Jesus. In that Kingdom, what is the seed? Who sow it? In our school, who has a part in the sowing? What is the soil? Our soul is made for God's world. In the soul of even the greatest sinner there is something which is able to make fertile the seed which is the Word of God. It is God who worketh in him, as the Apostle Paul tells us. And so the Kingdom of God grows.

In another parable Jesus compared the Kingdom to a very small seed which produces a very large herb or tree. What is the parable? What is the lesson of this parable?

The Kingdom of God Is Within You

Who is a Christian? A Christian is a follower of Jesus. To begin the Christian life means to love and admire and believe in Jesus the Christ, to will to obey him, to seek to serve him.

Living things grow. The plant that does not grow withers away and disappears. The mind that does not keep on learning and expanding loses ground. The soul that does not grow in grace and the love of God and man, as we read Jesus did when a lad, loses instead of remaining just the same. There are people who have grown tall and strong but who have "measly little souls." Do you know why? "The soul is the best part of us. It is the part that doesn't die. The soul is going to live for ever. Therefore we ought to see that it is growing every day that we live." One who has begun to live a Christian life has not done all that he can do, he must keep on learning and doing and progressing. He must study the Word of God, and especially the life of Christ, that he may know what is the will of God for him. Being a growing Christ is stout performance as well as joyous feeling. Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, said Jesus. Be not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh.

The Christian life cannot be maintained without prayer. The disciples, you remember, asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. In that prayer, what does he bid us pray about the kingdom? Prayer is to the spirit what food is to the body. And the Christian life needs exercise in service. Service is to the spirit what exercise is to the body. Just as the healthy blade grows into the vigorous ear and then into the full corn in the ear, so the boy and girl whose purposes are true grow into a Christian young manhood and womanhood of lofty ideals and then into lives that yield a rich harvest of Christian service.

"Why did you fall out of bed?" a small boy was asked, and he replied, "I guess it's because I stay too close to the getting-in-place." In our Christian life we cannot stay close to the "getting-in-place"; we must move forward or we shall fall backward.

A Poet's Picture of the Growth of the Human Soul

Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his poem, The Chambered Nautilus, tells us how the mollusc when young lives in a tiny shell bent like a horn; with growth this is increased spirally, and the mollusc draws itself onwards and closes a screen on the small chamber in which it first lived.

"Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;

Still as the spiral grew
He left the last year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home and knew the old no more."

And in this action of the mollusc the poet finds a picture of the growth of the human spirit and a prophecy of its expansion when free from all that now confines and restrains:

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul, as the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

The Seed that Has Become a Great Tree

In Gloucester, England, there is a small room in a narrow street, "Sooty Alley," where a century and a half ago (1782) the first Sunday school had its meeting. Robert Raikes had gone into the suburb of the city in search of a gardener. The latter was not home, and while waiting at the house for him, Robert Raikes saw a troop of children screaming and fighting on the street. He asked the gardener's wife how it happened that the children were so neglected. "Oh, sir, you should be here on Sundays," she exclaimed, "the noise is then so great that you can't read your Bible." "Can nothing be done for them?" questioned the great-hearted man, and then he decided to pay the gardener's wife for teaching these children on Sunday. Thus the first Sunday school was started. The people made sport of Raikes, calling him and his school, "Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment." In other places neglected children were gathered into a school on Sundays, following the example of Raikes, and a Society for the Founding of Sunday Schools was organized, and at the death of Raikes his "ragged regiment" had grown to a body of three hundred thousand members. And what an army it is now! Thirty million strong, enlisted from all over the world. Robert Raikes little thought when he had a dozen children in Gloucester taught on Sunday in order to keep them off the streets that he was planting a tree whose branches should cover the children of all lands.

Thy Kingdom Come

Jesus was the greatest Optimist the world has ever seen. At the time he spoke these parables nothing could have seemed more hopeless than the outlook for the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven in the hearts of men, ignorant or prejudiced or absorbed as were the hearts with which he was dealing, yet he was confident of the triumphant progress of the Kingdom. He never once doubted that his mission would succeed, however discouraging might seem to others the events of his life and death. His words were spoken, not written, he took not the slightest trouble to see that they were preserved in written form, but he knew that they were spirit and they were life, that they could not die. He was despised and rejected of men, but he knew the time would come when he would draw all men unto him. The Kingdom was as a grain of mustard seed, a bit of leaven, but he looked confidently forward to the time when his little band of faithful followers would become the missionary heroes of all the ages. He believed in the great tomorrow. He was the Prophet of Hope.

Sentence Sermons

The words of Jesus in the mind of one who does not do the will of Jesus is like seed-corn in a mummy's hand.—Henry van Dyke.

What you do all the time, and in every department of your life, will either have the effect of extending or hindering the extension of the territory over which Jesus is King.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Describe the Sea of Galilee. 2. What causes sudden tempests on so small a lake? 3. Read Ps. 107.23-31. 4. What is said about fear in the Shepherd Psalm? 5. Who is kept in perfect peace, as stated in Isa. 26.3? 6. What does Ps. 56.3 tell us to do when afraid? 7. Where was the demon-possessed man cured? 8. Why did the people beseech Jesus to leave their region?

TWO MIRACLES OF POWER

GOLDEN TEXT: Who then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Mark 4.41

LESSON Mark 4.35-5.20 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 104; 1-8

MARK 4.35 And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side. 36 And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. 37 And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling. 38 And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awaken him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

5.15 And they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind, *even* him that had the legion: and they were afraid. 16 And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with demons, and concerning the swine. 17 And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders. 18 And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be with him. 19 And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and *how* he had mercy on thee.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE STORM, 4.35-37. On the day that Jesus spoke many parables (our last lesson), he said at evening to his disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side," for he would escape the multitudes and rest. They took him with them in the boat, even as he was. What an insight into the humanness of Jesus that little phrase—even as he was—gives us! The day had severely taxed his physical strength, and he was tired out. He needed rest even as do we. The boat had been his pulpit, and when his discourse was ended and the disciples set sail from the shore, he sank down in the stern and fell asleep.

"What strikes us here is that he had learned to relax—to use the language of today. No sooner was his work done, than he composed himself to sleep, and as comfortably as possible he used the cushion as his pillow. Some people break down because they have never learned to relax. Their work done, they cannot rest. Their minds are still busy. If we are to work to the full, we must learn to drop the yoke swiftly and to rest with both mind and body. Jesus is an example in this also" (R. C. Gillie).

Suddenly there arose a great windstorm, and drove the waves into the boat so that it began to fill. There have always been sudden and violent storms on the Sea of Galilee. See The Georgraphical Background for an explanation.

II. JESUS' POWER OVER THE STORM, 4.38-41. Experienced sailors though they were, the disciples were frantic with fear. They awakened their Master, crying, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?"

If they had faith that he could save them, why did they not have faith that his presence with them was guarantee against their drowning? "When the Master had said, 'Let us go over unto the other side of the sea,' the disciples might have known," John McNeill thinks, "that to the other side they would come if they had to foot it at the bottom of the sea." From a borrowed source we take the thought that this is typical of us all. We have a faith in God's power to save and help us, but we are always dictating the ways in which his help is to come, and are distrustful of any methods but our own.

Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." The Greek word for *be still* means literally *be muzzled;* the sea is personified, spoken to as though a raging animal. "The true view to take of the apostrophe to the storm is to conceive of it, not as spoken with express intent to influence either the wind or the disciples, still less as addressed to Satan, the prince of the power of the air, but as the spontaneous expression of victorious faith and heroic self-

possession. Jesus spoke, and the storm ceased. What was the connection between the word and the event? Was it a happy coincidence, or a proof of the sagacity of Jesus in foreseeing that the tempest would soon be past, or was it a miracle wrought either by divine providence or by Christ's will? There can be no doubt, according to the narrative—the wind and the sea obey him" (A. B. Bruce).

"It is a picture of the peace he bestows. However feebly we understand it, the story at least is luminous to every loving eye with this—the majesty and beauty of Christ and the way in which peace flows out abundantly whenever he is present. A thousand saints have felt that. These stories of Jesus are so full of his spirit that they scatter it everywhere, and the calm that fell upon the waters of Gennesaret have been renewed in the peacefulness and rest that have fallen upon multitudes of hearts that have read or listened to the narrative" (Phillips Brooks).

After the calm Jesus rebuked his disciples, questioning, "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?"—not yet, after having seen my power exercised so many times?

"The Master's question implies that the disciples possessed faith, but they could not find it when the storm broke upon them. Where is your faith? A well-regulated mind is a mind that is stored with information and that knows exactly where to find each of its innumerable treasures. A well-regulated soul is a soul richly endowed with faith, and that knows exactly where to find it when occasion for its use arrives" (F. W. Boreham).

In great fear the disciples said one to another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" "Not, 'What manner of men are we?' Not a word now even as to what manner of storm it had been. Great storm and great calm are lost in the great Lord of both. The lake is calm, but not their hearts!" (Dan Crawford).

"Why did they not gather round his feet, and praise his name for such marvelous deliverance? They thought they knew him by this time. They had been a good deal with him; they walked with him, talked with him, ate and drank with him; and, maybe, they were beginning to think they knew him through and through, when suddenly that wild night or morning rather, by working a miracle like that, the Godhead blazed out in that tired-looking, lowly, lonely Jesus, and he towered away up above them into Godhead and infinity and eternity; and as he towered they cowered, and blanched to the lips. Who is this? It was the Godhead blazing out too near. And they forgot to say Hallelujah" (John McNeill).

"Men are troubled still that the wind and sea should obey him. His influence, which ought, they think, to have ended long ago, is not yet even on the wane. These miracles of the Gospel that take so much explaining, this persistent spiritual influence that connects itself with the risen, reigning Redeemer, they compel men still to ask, 'Who, then, is this?'"

III. JESUS' POWER OVER ABNORMALITY, 5.1-20. On the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which they reached after the storm was calmed, Jesus was met by a man whose abode was the tombs, for he had an unclean spirit. No one had been able effectually to chain him. Men had tried, but he had always broken the chains and fetters. Like a maniac he cried out, night and day, and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran to him and fell down before him crying, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, earnestly entreat thee, torment me not." And Jesus said, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." Recall paragraph 4, page 39.

"Whether we take this teaching of Jesus literally or not, whether we believe that evil is embodied in demonic personality or not, one thing is unquestionable. Jesus regarded evil as a positive, organic, ever active, malignant power, a prince of this world, whose domain lies all around us on every side. There is a conflict going on in this world. It is not a mere game. It is an elemental warfare between right and wrong. We are cast into the midst of this conflict. An unseen, mighty, skillful, relentless adversary is against us. And in every heart there is a traitor ready to betray the citadel into his hands" (Henry van Dyke).

"What is thy name?" "Here was a voice which sounded as perhaps no human voice before or since has sounded—the quiet, gentle, affectionate tone must have

gone home with healing to the recesses of that shattered mind; and here were the words of One who spoke to him as a man speaks to his friend. Other men had repeatedly come to bind him with their cruel chains; who could this be who came with no chain, but who bound him all the more firmly by the gentle bonds of love?" (J. E. McFadyen).

"My name is legion." "Only by an image drawn from reminiscences of his former life can he express his sense of his own condition; he had seen the serried ranks of the Roman legion, that fearful instrument of conquest, that sign of terror and fear to the conquered nations, before which the Jews more especially quailed. Even such, at once one and so many, cruel and inexecrable and strong, were the powers that were tyrannizing over him" (Trench).

On the mountain side a great herd of swine were feeding, and the demons besought Jesus to send them into the swine. Jesus gave them leave. Doubtless the calm approach of that strong, pure Man, perhaps the only One whose eyes had never shown fear of the maniac, stopped him in his headlong course and silenced his loud cries. Jesus appealed to the man, asked him his name, humored him in the idea that the evil spirit might go into the swine, and with his authoritative 'Begone' compelled the man to realize that he was freed. Whatever evil the man had, he need not have. So Jesus believed, so he made the man believe. It was the spiritual appeal to his manhood, and the man in the maniac responded" (T. G. Soares).

The herd of swine, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep incline into the sea, and were drowned. Many people, rightly believing with Whittier that "Nothing can be good in him which evil is in me," are troubled by the owners' loss of the swine. But might not the good wrought to the whole countryside by the cure of this dangerous man outweigh the loss to the owners of the swine? Matthew says that no man could pass that way because of him. This herd may not have been the first herd that had been driven into the sea by the man's frantic mania. The owners may in the end have been thankful that at last the hillsides were made safe for their animals.

The men who fed the swine told far and near what had happened, and the people flocked to the spot to see for themselves. They found the maniac clothed and in his right mind. Fear seized them, and they besought Jesus to leave their region. They cared less for the recovery of the man than for the loss of the herd.

"The law of gravitation would not now be accepted if it interfered with vested interests" (Macaulay).

As Jesus was entering the boat, the man who had been a maniac begged permission to go with him. Jesus, however, bade him go home to his friends and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him, and how he had had mercy on him.

"It is of tremendous importance that we bear in mind that while the gospel of Christ calls us into personal relationship with him, it is a relationship which nevertheless has social consequences. While his blessing begins with me, it by no means ends with me" (J. Stuart Holden).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He was in the stern, asleep, 4.38. It is said that in the flourishing epoch of Galilee, under the Roman rule, there were four hundred vessels on the lake where now there are scarcely a dozen. The modern boats are all of the same type, doubtless built on the model of those used by the apostolic fishermen of Galilee. They are broad, with a very shallow keel, are decked at the bow and stern, which are high; have an open well in the center, where a mast can be stepped; and are capable of accommodating from a dozen to twenty men. Under the deck of the bow is a sort of open cabin, where there is room for several men to lie down, and where our Lord was asleep safe from the waves breaking over the prow during the storm. When needful, the boats are propelled by oars; but whenever the wind favors, the mast is raised, and the large lateen sail similar to those in use on the Mediterranean is hoisted.—H. B. Tristram, in Eastern Customs.

A man with an unclean spirit, 5.2. Belief in demons was widespread in the ancient world. The earth was supposed to be full of demons who were seeking a habitation in human beings. It is interesting to recall here the fact that in the Moslem world today one who has an inclination to gape closes his mouth quickly, for gaping is considered the work of the devil who would thus enter and take possession of one.

The Hindus are said to have the same belief, and they twirl their fingers before their mouths when gaping so as to prevent a devil from getting in.

The superstitious belief of the natives of China is told by Elliott J. Osgood in Breaking Down Chinese Walls: "Evil spirits are supposed to be the cause of most diseases, and the Chinese physician seeks to expel the evil spirit. For this purpose he uses a long needle which, cold or hot, clean or dirty, he thrusts into the part of the body affected by the disease. His purpose is to make an opening through which the spirit may depart. Into the liver or neck, knee or elbow joint, it is thrust, setting up inflammation and abscesses, often rendering the part forever stiff.

"Within the walled cities very rarely will a street run directly from one gate through the city to a gate on the opposite side. The demons might enter a gate and sweeping through in a straight line, entirely destroy the place. But it is supposed that they are unable to turn sharp corners. So up in the heart of the city, one street ends abruptly against a stone wall, and one must turn a sharp angle and cross to another street before reaching one that passes out the opposite gate."

Who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him, 5.3. The tombs were caves, either natural or hewn out of the rock, which were used as burial places for the dead. They were always outside cities, usually in lonely regions, and because they contained the bones of the dead they were regarded as unclean. Syrians today believe that evil spirits haunt such places.

There were no homes for the afflicted in Palestine at this time. The Lebanon Hospital for the Insane, about five miles from Beyrout, was up to the time of the War the only Hospital for the Insane in Syria. Patients are brought here from all over Syria. One incurable patient was brought from a monastery that professed to exorcise demons, where for two years she had been half starved, beaten, and chained. Then her husband took her away, chained her by the neck in a room and left her there with some bread on the floor near by. An English woman discovered her plight and had her brought to the hospital.

A great herd of swine, 5.11. Although the law forbade the eating of swine's flesh, there was no law against the raising of swine. There were many Romans dwelling in the Decapolis, east of the Jordan, and for them the swine were doubtless destined.

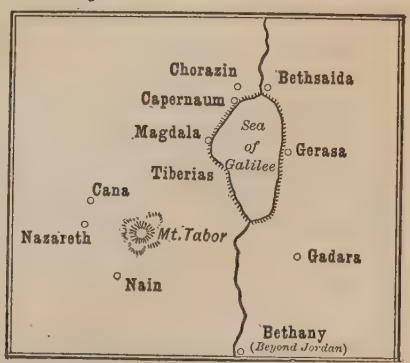
THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What cures of demon-possession have we studied? Of what did the scribe accuse Jesus in regard to demons?

The Calming of the Sea and of the Troubled Spirit

Mark records these events as taking place immediately after the teaching by parables. Jesus must have been sadly in need of rest, and there was a retreat on the other side of the lake where he hoped to find solitude and relief. On the way over the storm arose. It is significant that the story of the calming of the troubled sea is immediately followed by the story of the calming of the troubled spirit. In both instances Jesus was the Peace-bringer, in the one case in the realm of the natural, in the other in a still darker realm, that of a spirit tortured and torn.



Cities around the Sea of Galilee

No one who has seen the Sea of Galilee will ever forget his first view of that famous lake. It comes suddenly into view as one rides toward it from the west, a little gem of a lake far below, surrounded by a wall of hills. Riding down the steep hill we look across to the heights of the country of the Gerasenes, the scene of the freeing of the maniac. Directly below lies Tiberias, and along the western shore are the sites, though we cannot know where to find them, of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The lake at sunset and in the early morning is won-

derfully beautiful, the colors and reflections upon its calm surface once seen form an unforgettable picture.

Although the lake is only eight miles wide and thirteen miles long, it is subject to sudden and fierce tempests. It lies six hundred feet below the Mediterranean, while the great eastern plateaus rise to a height of two to four thousand feet above the sea; and when the wind is drawn down through the gorges cut in these plateaus by the watercourses, as through funnels, or when it blows up from the south through the narrow Jordan Valley, it beats with fury upon the lake and lashes it into foam.

Gerasa, "the country of the Gerasenes," has been identified with the ruins of Kersa, or Gersa, near which are ancient tombs and a "steep place" leading down to the sea.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In a church filled by classes of school children I heard the elderly teacher asking the well-trained children queer questions which were quickly answered. She asked, "What did God create?" The answer came quick as lightning, "Light." "What did God not need to create?" Answer, "Darkness." "What did God know before?" Answer, "That man should fall."

Traditional Hill of Swine

No well-meant philosophy can explain evil, still less explain it away. Life has no more painful crisis than when the child first discovers the existence and mysterious power of evil.

Three-year-old Ingrid does not understand why nettles exist, since they sting. A celebrated French scientist, who had adopted a talented little boy, anxiously asked my advice. What should he answer when the lad inquired, *"Dieu pourquoi ne tue-t'-il pas le diable?"* (Why does God not kill the devil?) Immanuel Kant speaks of *Das radikale Böse* (the Radical Evil). But his philosophic genius has in reality progressed no further than the child, with his childishly outspoken troubles and questions.

The only solution offered by Christianity is that of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, where he promises that in the end Christ shall have put down all the powers of evil. If we look about us in the world, and if we search our own hearts, it is difficult to believe what the apostle predicts: that all enemies, sin and evil, corruptness, want, and death shall be put down. For we know the fiendish power of evil. One asks himself often, "Can such a thing happen if there is a God?" But Jesus is come to save those who are lost, and we are convinced of his might.—Nathan Soderblom.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
JESUS' POWER OVER NATURE AND HUMAN LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

Have you ever thought of Jesus as wearied, exhausted, "tired to death," as we are wont to say? He became just as worn and weary and spent as we do. As we find comfort in the thought that Jesus knew what it means to be severely tempted, so may we in the knowledge that he knew what it means to be utterly wearied.

How does our text begin? What had Jesus done that day to make him physically exhausted so that it was necessary for him to make his escape from the crowd, "even as he was," without stopping for food or drink? The storm on the lake followed. What causes the great windstorms on the Sea of Galilee? In one of those terrible

storms, when the boat was filling with water, Jesus slept on, slept the deep sleep of an exhausted man. The terrified disciples awoke him. They reproached him with neglecting them in their hour of need. What is the meaning of his answer? How did he then show his power?

Fellowship with Christ Does Not Insure Outward Calm

Enlistment in the service of God does not guarantee freedom from the storms and distresses of life. Even those who keep very close to the Master may be assaulted by trial and temptation. The very boat that carries the Lord is often tossed about by the tempest and sadly battered by the waves. Into the lives of the most truly consecrated and self-sacrificing persons come many and severe trials. Sorrows, temptations, perplexities, yea, great waves of trouble, roll over the life and seem to threaten complete shipwreck. Sometimes these storms seem to come as the direct result of sincere devotion. Many a man has been called upon to endure poverty and loss because his conscience was keener than that of the majority of his contemporaries. Refusal to conform to certain unchristian customs has entailed loss of position, or perfect honesty of dealing has cut down profits, or loyalty of conviction has been punished as crime. In such cases the trial of faith is doubly severe.—George Hubbard.

Fellowship with Jesus Does Afford Inward Peace amid Outward Storm

To him who has the mind of Christ, all things become God's ministers; hence he knows no fear. Many a saint has passed unmoved through deepest afflictions, resting calmly on the promises of God, and being assured that nothing comes to any soul that is not the perfect expression of everlasting love. Others have been made strong and true, have met trials and dangers without flinching. History has no more luminous page than that which records the sinking of the Titanic, while the captain and crew stood fearlessly in their places and the ship's band played "Nearer, My God, to Thee" as the waves slowly rose and swallowed them together with their ill-fated vessel. So may it be with you and me. If we are conscious of divine Sonship, if we know that our lives are unreservedly consecrated to the fulfilment of our divine mission, that wherever we go or whatever we do the Christ is with us, not only in our ship but in our hearts as well, we need never be disturbed by storms, however terrible. Rather may we always sing with Anna Waring:

The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

And is not this inner peace, after all, the matter of vital importance? It is inward restlessness that kills. It is the storm of the heart that destroys the peace of our lives. Who has the peace of Christ in his soul enjoys the greatest of earthly blessings.—Condensed from Spiritual Messages of the Miracles, by George Henry Hubbard.

How Shall We Understand the Miracle of the Gadarene Demoniac?

How can we believe in a man possessed of a legion of demons? We would give a much simpler explanation of the affliction of the poor fellow who was ostracized by his acquaintances, and fierce and naked, had his abode among the tombs.

The idea also of the dispossessed demons entering into a herd of swine, causing them to run violently down a steep place into the lake, is one that seems to cry aloud for a simpler interpretation. We know that animals can easily be stampeded, and we should, no doubt, prefer to regard this catastrophe as a mere coincidence. It took place at the same moment as the man was healed, but had no other connection.

But this easy explanation leaves us with haunting doubts concerning the trustworthiness of the Biblical narrative, and worse still, of the mentality of Jesus. Did he share in the superstitions of his time? Did he, on the other hand, while knowing better, use language which lent support to fallacious ideas? That is not a comfortable thought. There is another alternative. Have we here merely a popular explanation of something that Jesus said and did, so that, whereas he healed a deranged man, they, regarding his derangement as caused by demons, saw in his healing their necessary expulsion, and beholding the swine suddenly filled with terror, had no doubt that it was caused by the same sinister power? That is more

satisfactory to many minds, and some, wisely enough perhaps, are content to leave the matter there.

There is, however, still another possibility which ought not arbitrarily to be ruled out. It is more than we can prove that there is no connection whatever between the inhabitants of the invisible world and those of flesh and blood. We may depend upon it that if we rule out this story of the Gadarene miracle as inherently unbelievable we commit an act of intellectual arrogance. If at the moment we halt between two opinions we shall be wise if at least we fix our attention upon some things in this story that are full of teaching and by no means foreign to our experience.

It is a well observed characteristic of the most unusual stories of the Bible that they are always profoundly human. The element of miracle never contradicts our ordinary humanity. The supernatural always illuminates the natural.

It is not difficult, for instance, to appreciate the forces which drove this poor fellow out to find a more congenial abode among the tombs than among his kith and kin. Today we should put him in an asylum, but the gap between the sane and the insane is none the less wide and deep.

He only became a portent when his healing was set over against the loss of a herd of many swine. Then, as inevitably as now, the material loss was swiftly computed, while the gain of a soul restored seemed abstract and relatively unimportant. The real task of religion is persistently to assert the value of man over against all material things whatsoever. Civilization, in the last analysis, consists in the exaltation of the soul of man. This is the fight that all good men and women must wage without cessation.

Where to See the Divine Power

There is in many minds something which makes them crave for proofs of the presence and power of God in remarkable interruptions of nature and providence rather than in their orderly course. It is a perversion of the truth. If a miracle is sublime, how much more sublime is the unity and greatness of the order which it seems, on some singular occasion, to interrupt! The mind which has learned to see God in the daily course of nature and providence comes nearer to the happy truth than that to which this order is meaningless, and which cries out to him to raise up his power and come and declare his presence by miraculous powers. Is it not better for us to learn that God is near in the daily exhibitions of his goodness than to look for him only in more rare events in which we try to persuade ourselves that he has worked a miracle in answer to our cry? For one miraculous gift we enjoy a thousand customary gifts of grace and kindness. Happy are we if in our deep hearts we consent that this is so, and that this is best.—G. R. Wynne.

For Bible Class Discussion

Faith's conquest of fear. See Chapter XII of New Starts in Life, by Phillips Brooks; Chapter VIII in The Master's Questions to His Disciples, by G. H. Knight; The Conquest of Fear, by Basil King.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. On what other occasion did Jesus say that the dead was only sleeping? 2. How did the woman think she would be healed? 3. What should our attitude be toward superstitious faith? 4. What importance did Jesus place upon faith? 5. What is faith in Jesus?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE UNIVERSAL POWER OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

When Captain John Smith lived in Virginia he found the Indians were in the habit of drying their tobacco and crushing it into powder that they might sprinkle it upon the water when a storm came. Xerxes, King of Persia, ordered the waves of the sea lashed with whips, because a storm had arisen and had destroyed the bridges over which his army was to march. Such efforts to control the waves of the sea seem very silly to us, for we know that men have no power over them. But there is a record in the Gospels of the time when Jesus calmed the waves of the Sea of Galilee. What is the story?

How People Were Calmed in Another Storm

A Japanese Christian father and mother when dying asked a missionary to take

their little baby girl and bring her up as though she were her own. The missionary promised to do this, and she cared lovingly for the little orphan. The baby went with her wherever she went. One night when the baby had grown to be five years old they were the only passengers on board a boat. A sudden, furious storm arose, and the boatmen gave up all hope of being saved. The frightened mother threw herself down beside her child and cried, "O my darling, we are lost! We are going to drown in the sea!" The little girl so suddenly aroused from her sleep did not understand what her mother meant, but she remembered a song that she had learned about the sea and she began to sing it—

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea.

The words calmed her mother, and she joined in singing the hymn through. The storm ceased as suddenly as it had arisen, and the ignorant sailors said it was because of the words of the "Jesus People," as they called the missionary and her little girl, and they wanted to know more about such a Pilot.

He Rebuked the Winds and the Sea; and There Was a Great Calm

The story of Canute is well known, and it seems also to be a true story. Canute was one of the Danish kings of England. He flourished at the beginning of the eleventh century, and he was so wise, able, and good that he was called "the Great." At one time, when he was holding court near Southampton, some of his attendants, in the way that was usual with them, sought to puff him up with words of flattery—saying that King Canute was lord not only of the land, but also of the sea, which they affirmed would be ready to do his will. That he might silence and shame them, the king ordered his chair to be carried down to the shore when the tide was advancing, and, seating himself, commanded the waves to retire. Soon, however, the tide began to flow up round his feet; whereupon Canute dealt his courtiers a severe rebuke for their foolish flattery, and for the impiety of comparing a weak earthly king, whose control stopped with the shore, to the omnipotent Monarch of the universe.

The Lord is mightier than the waters. He has been always the King of the Universe, and all the powers of nature obey his voice. We see the Son of Man standing one evening on the stern of the boat which he used on the Lake of Galilee, and with a word calming the fearful storm which had lashed its waters into fury. On another night of tempest we see him treading upon the billows, as he hastened to relieve and save his disciples, whom he had seen "distressed in rowing." No wonder that both The Twelve and the sailors whispered to one another, "What manner of man is this?" In the picture-writing of ancient Egypt the thought of "the impossible" was set forth by the figure of a man walking on the sea; therefore surely the Man who could do this must have been the Son of God.

In Holy Scripture "waters" and "floods" often stand for "the tumult of the people," and the opposition of man to the will of God. They refer to the raging storms of sin, and to the fierce persecution of the Lord's servants. But Jehovah can master these "mighty breakers" also. It costs him no trouble whatever to subdue any form of human rebellion. None of the floods of persecution are able to quench the love of Christ in the hearts of his followers. The Divine Redeemer can say to all the billows of sin and pain, "Peace, be still!" and when he does so, the storm will be hushed, and there will be "a great calm."—Condensed from Gospel Milk and Honey, by Charles Jerdan.

In the Storm

Bertha Bates, a girl of seventeen years, was visiting her grandmother on the farm. One afternoon when all the men were away and the two women were left alone in the big farm house an electric storm passed over them. The sky was covered by clouds as black as ink, lightning tore continually through the air, and crashes of deafening thunder followed. Bertha was terror-stricken and wondered at the calmness of her grandmother, who sat quietly in her chair, looking out at the storm.

"Granny, it's awful," cried Bertha, flinging herself down beside her grandmother and grasping her hand. "We shall be killed."

"And what if we are?" replied her grandmother coolly. "Many people have gone to heaven in a storm."

"Aren't you afraid, granny? Aren't you sensible of the danger?" cried the girl.

"Bertha," said her grandmother, "did you never hear of the little girl and her

father who were caught in just such a storm as this a mile or so from this very house? The father picked his little one up in his arms, covered her with his cape and started for home. He said the little girl sighed contentedly as she slipped her arm round her father's neck. She cuddled close to his shoulder. The man stumbled on through the storm while the child fell fast asleep!"

"Why, yes, granny; I've heard my father tell that story about me," said Bertha, "but he was big and strong and had me in his arms."

"We are in our Heavenly Father's arms today, Bertha," said her grandmother; "isn't he as strong and big and kind as your own good father? If you could trust your father, do you not think that you can also trust God, your Heavenly Father? As long as he has us in his everlasting arms of love, all is well."

"You're a saint, granny," declared Bertha. "I wish I could trust like you."

"That little girl was a perfect saint, Bertha," said Grandma Bates. "I wish that I could trust as she did, and could go calmly to sleep even in the midst of a storm."

Bertha's trembling ceased. She drew closer to her grandmother, and the two women watched in silence, absorbed each in her own thoughts, as the storm passed away, giving place to a calm and beautiful evening.

"I think God spoke to me in that storm," said Bertha quietly and thoughtfully. "I never before had such peace in my soul."—The Youth's Companion.

The Mighty Miracle

The central figure in this miracle of Gadara is just the sort of derelict we meet with every day, a victim of evil habits, "down and out." Jesus said to him, "Thou unclean spirit, come out of him." At that word of command the furies fled, and the man lay sobbing at his feet. It was a mighty miracle, mightier than the stilling of the tempest. No other marvel is comparable with such a transformation of character. " 'Twas great to call a world from naught, 'tis greater to redeem." This man is a new creature in Christ Jesus; new will, new heart, new conscience, new life. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. It is a moral revolution, wrought in a moment by the power of God.

The supreme evidence of this man's conversion was his complete, unmurmuring acquiescence in his Master's will. "Go home to thy friends," said Jesus, "and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee."

I wish we might have seen his home-coming. On the evening of that day he gathered his wife and children about him and told them the story.

The next morning his neighbors dropped in, old friends who had known him in earlier and better days; some perhaps who had joined in his revels and tarried with him long at the wine. And they marveled at what they saw. His earnest face, his evident sincerity, his interest in their welfare, these won for him a hearing. There was no gainsaying his word. He told his simple story, keeping Jesus at the center of it. He was never weary of sounding the praises of his Friend. Thus it is written: "He published throughout the whole city what Jesus had done for him." —Condensed from a Sermon by David James Burrell.

Sentence Sermons

Show the new life where the old one was lived; it will cost, but it will count.—M. D. Babcock.

With God go over the seas—without him, not over the threshold.—Russian Proverb.

O Maker of the mighty deep
Whereon our vessels fare,
Above our life's adventure keep
Thy faithful watch and care!
In thee we trust, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small!—Henry van Dyke.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. On what other occasions were the three disciples mentioned in verse 37 the only ones whom Jesus allowed with him? (Mt. 17.1, 2; 27, 37.) 2. What did Jesus mean when he said, "The child is not dead, but sleepeth"? 3. What is the literal meaning of our word cemetery? (Dictionary.) 4. What were the words which Jesus spoke to Lazarus when he was about to raise him from the dead? (Jn. 11.11, 13.) 5. How many others did Jesus raise from the dead? (Lk. 7.11-17; Jn. 11.1-46.) 6. Learn Jn. 14.6.

OTHER MIGHTY WORKS OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Thy faith hath made thee whole. Mark 5.34

LESSON Mark 5.22-43

DEVOTIONAL READING
Ephesians 3.14-21

MARK 5.22 And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, 23 and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: *I pray thee,* that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live. 24 And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.

25 And a woman, who had an issue of blood, twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27 having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched his garment.

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's *house,* saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further? 36 But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe.

41 And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. 42 And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE OVER PRIDE, verses 22, 23. When Jesus reached the western shore of the lake, after the events of our last lesson, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue (perhaps of the one which had been built by the centurion of Lk. 7.5) came to him and fell at his feet in supplication. "My little daughter [an only child, Lk. 8.42] is at the point of death: I pray thee, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live." The ruler was a proud Pharisee, and we have seen how bitterly hostile to Jesus the majority of the Pharisees had become by this time. No thought of what others said about Jesus deterred Jairus from seeking him, and no thought of his own station held him back from throwing himself in an attitude of worship at the feet of the Rabbi. There was no act of homage he would not render if only his beloved child might be restored to him.

II. THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH, verses 24-34. Jesus assented to the ruler's urgent request, and was on his way with him to his home, followed by a great crowd of people, when an interruption came. There was a woman in the throng who had been ill for twelve years and had spent all her money on physicians, under whose treatment she had suffered much, but had grown worse rather than better. This recalls the ancient Jewish saying that "Even the best of doctors deserves Gehenna." This woman pushed herself forward and touched the garment of Jesus in the belief that the touch would cure her.

"Would she have come to Christ sooner had she known of him? One cannot tell. At all events she is typical of many a soul who only comes to the Good Physician when he has failed everywhere else. Christ is the last resource. Is that an ideal faith? Is it worthy of God to give him only the residue of your *dernier ressort?* I will not say he will not receive you. He is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him. But be sure of this, that never a man delayed his coming to the Savior who did not bitterly regret it" (W. Mackintosh Mackay).

"If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole," the woman said to herself. It was an old superstition that there was magical virtue in the garments of certain people which would flow out without any act of will on their part. Recall the expectations in regard to Peter's shadow (Acts 5.15). It was a blind, ignorant, superstitious sort of faith, and Dean Charles Reynolds Brown fittingly compares it to the desire to touch the alleged fragments of the true cross, or the holy coat at

Trèves, or to stand in the grotto at Lourdes made famous by the legend of the appearance of the Virgin. "The woman's faith was not orthodox; it was not rational; it was not regular and conventional; but it was real. And because it was real, the Master honored it, overlaid though it was with blind superstition. He stood ready to welcome and to reward her imperfect faith and to lead it forth by the right way into something better. The timid, ignorant touch of faith should not fall to the ground unnoticed."

"To denounce a superstition, which is often but the husk of a living faith, was not the way of Jesus. It is a cruel, and in the end an ineffective way of dealing with sincere and honest souls. When the spirit of Jesus responded with quick sympathy to the mute appeal, and when he turned with the question, 'Who touched me?' there was no indignation in his tone. When the woman looked up in his face, there was no eloquent denunciation of her miserable ignorance of the new theology. At the heart of her superstitious act he, the all-wise and all-loving, saw her faith and blessed it" (W. D. Mackenzie).

"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague," were the comforting words the woman heard. It was not her touch of his garment, nor the supposed magical virtue in his garment or its tassel, but the real faith that was mixed with her superstition that had healed her. However important the work at the end of the road which he was traveling, Jesus could always stop to heal or bless those by the side of the road who stretched out imploring hands.

"The things Jesus did on the way to the things he set out to do were often the largest things he did in his life. We are never able to measure a human life. We cannot tell how much we do. But it is safe to say that the things we do on the way to the things we have purposed are often larger than the things we set out to accomplish. All the time something is going out from you for good or evil which you cannot measure, which you cannot call back" (George L. Cody).

"Love has a hem to its garment
Which reaches the very dust.
It can touch the stains
Of the streets and the lanes,
And because it can it must.
I ought to bend to the lowest,
I ought, and therefore I can.
I was made to the end
That I might descend
In the steps of the Son of Man."

III. CHRIST'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH, verses 35-42. This conversation with the woman interrupted the going to Capernaum, and the ruler must have found the delay almost impossible to endure. Excessive anxiety makes one self-centered. "The world with all its sins and sorrows," as Dr. F. B. Meyer here observes, "is obscured as we concentrate our mind or heart on our own special anxiety. We want God to concentrate his thought and care on our plea, regardless of all other supplicants. Jairus was so preoccupied with his own matter that he chafed sorely when this woman, who had suffered for as many years as his child had been born, put in her plea. He must stand there and learn that the Fountain of supply might be tapped by others, and that there was ample for him and them."

While Jesus was speaking with the woman, there came a messenger from the ruler's house who said to the ruler, "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" It seems as if the messenger wished to add, "We told you there was no use in running after him, your daughter was at the point of death when you left home."

The message did not trouble Jesus. Instead of "not heeding the words spoken," Dr. Moffatt translates the Greek more forcefully, "Instantly Jesus ignored the remark." "Fear not, only believe," were the comforting words which Jesus addressed to the stricken father.

Jesus then continued his way to the house of Jairus, but permitted no one to come with him save Peter, James, and John, the three disciples who especially shared his confidence. These three who were nearest to him throughout his ministry; they were the only witnesses of the miracle wrought in the home of Jairus; the only witnesses at his transfiguration; the only ones near him on the night of his betrayal.

On reaching the ruler's house they heard the tumult which was usual at such a time, the weeping and wailing of hired mourners. "Why make ye a tumult and weep?" Jesus said to them; "the child is not dead, but sleepeth." By these words

A VILLAGE IN GALILEE

And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about. —Mark 1. 28

Jesus did not deny that physical life had departed. He was speaking figuratively, as later in the case of the death of Lazarus, Jn. 11.11-13. He spoke the words in the full knowledge of the miracle which he was about to perform, when he would waken her. The figure of speech may have been a common one, but the words tell us also his view of death, that death is a sleep, a closing of the eyes to this world to open them again in a better one. "We shall sleep, but we shall not all die," said Paul; "for if any man keep the word of Christ, he shall never see death; he is passed from death into life; he abideth forever." On the monument over the grave of Keats at Rome these words of Shelley are engraved:—

"Peace, peace, he is not dead, he doth not sleep,
He hath awakened from the dream of life;
'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife."

The people in the house took the words of Jesus literally, and by their scornful laughter said that they knew she was really dead. Jesus put them all out of the room, allowing only his three disciples and the father and mother to remain. Then he took the child by the hand and said in Aramaic, *Talitha, cumi,* that is, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." Jesus spoke the language of the common people among whom he lived, which was Aramaic, a dialect akin to Hebrew. "A close study of his words shows a touch of tenderness, as if a bonnie Scotsman had said, 'My wee lassie, come now.'" At once the twelve-year-old maiden arose and walked.

"Bereaved people may cry bitterly: 'But my young daughter was taken and was not restored to me. There is no easing of my grief through this story.' But may there not be? The same considerate Lord dwells on the other side whither your child has gone. Can you not trust her to One who knows so well both the needs and ways, the fears and memories of a child? 'She sleeps,' is the true description of every dead child, though not called back to life here" (R. C. Gillie).

Then Jesus thoughtfully directed that something be brought the maiden to eat. The people were amazed, and the fame of Jesus spread throughout the land.

"The power to raise the dead Jesus did not often exercise. It would be rather a dangerous power to put into our clumsy hands. But the power to comfort, to cheer, to love, to help, day by day, he exercised all the time. And that power he freely transmits. It is vastly better than the other, both for all his uses and for ours" (W. F. McDowell).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He falleth at his feet, verse 22. This humble attitude was prompted by great and peculiar distress; but still it would not have been assumed unless the custom of the times had given it sanction in the practise of those who wanted to show extreme respect to their superiors. It seems to have been common to show different degrees of respect to different persons, according to their rank and importance, by bending the body in a greater or less measure. Simply to bow down the head, was an expression of mere common civility; to curve the body low down, signified a considerable degree of reverence; to throw it entirely down, with the face upon the ground, was an act of the greatest homage.—Nevin, Biblical Antiquities.

Was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, verse 26. The Egyptians had some medical knowledge before 2500 B. C., and before 2000 B. C. the Babylonians made laws governing the practise of medicine and surgery. In India, too, the ancient Hindus possessed some medical knowledge. The books of the Egyptians show us that they knew something of the medicinal value of many herbs and something of surgery. It was thought, however, in all these countries that disease was caused by demons which had taken up their residence in the body, and the nauseating doses which the patient was compelled to take were accompanied by the recitation of incantations for the expulsion of demons. We do not know what kind of physicians were to be found among the Jews at this time. Some centuries later we find a good deal of fairly sound medical knowledge reflected in the Talmud. Perhaps the Palestinian physicians of the time of Christ were as good as were to be found in other countries. Even if this were the case, however, the physicians were ignorant of anatomy, of many elementary facts of physiology, and, like all people down to

the end of the nineteenth century, they were ignorant of germs. Their remedies were often of a nature to foster the germ of a disease rather than to kill it. What sort of treatment the physicians of Galilee had given this woman we can only imagine, but it is easy to understand the statement in the Gospel of Mark, that she was "nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."—George A. Barton, in "Jesus of Nazareth."

He beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly, verse 38. It is still the custom in Palestine to hire mourners to bewail the dead. As soon as a death takes place relatives and friends gather around the body and utter their lamentations, and then their place is taken by those hired to keep up the weeping and loud cries. Matthew (9.23) mentions the flute-players; Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, probably a man of wealth, could afford to hire many musicians. "Two flutes and one mourning woman were necessary at the burial of a wife, even of the poorest man. In Rome the number of flute-players was by the Twelve Tables limited to twelve as a check upon the luxury of woe."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What were the duties of a ruler of the synagogue? What remarkable cures have we studied so far this Quarter?

The Place and Time of Our Lesson

It was on his return to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee after having been in the country of the Gadarenes on the eastern side, that the ruler of the synagogue came to Jesus. In all three Synoptic Gospels the three events of the storm on the lake, the healing of the Gadarene demoniac, and the raising of the daughter of Jairus, are related together, though Matthew assigns them to the time when Jesus sat at meat with Matthew the publican, an earlier date than in Mark and Luke. The account of Jesus' control over winds and waves and disordered mind is fittingly followed by that of his control over death: he is Lord of life and death.

The Gospels record three cases in which Jesus restored the dead to life. In the case of the daughter of Jairus, the breath had left the body for only a short time. In the case of the widow's son of Nain, the body was on the way for burial. In the case of Lazarus, the body had been in the grave four days.

Eusebius (church historian of the fourth century A. D.) says that the woman healed of her plague was a resident of Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi) near the sources of the Jordan. "Her home," he wrote, "is shown in the city, and the wonderful monuments of our Savior's benefit to her are still remaining. At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone stands a brazen statue of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her like one entreating. Opposite to this is another statue, that of a man, erect, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman. This statue they said was a likeness of Jesus Christ."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

You must take for granted a widespread, if superficial, knowledge of this story in your class. Your work is to rob it of familiarity, and to make it so vivid as to make our Lord vivid, too.

Perhaps the best way is by a succession of contrasts. (1) The crowd by the sea just pleasantly interested; the panting, pale-faced father in horrible suspense. (2) The cold-blooded bearers of the message, "She is dead"; our Lord with warm sympathy saying, "Hold on to your faith." (3) The noisy mourners in the full flood of lamentation; our Lord demanding silence: "Hush, she sleeps." (4) The dead girl prone and motionless, her spirit away but able to hear the Master's voice; our Lord with his vitality, calling back life to the cold body; the warm hand holding the cold hand. (5) The excited parents; Jesus so matter-of-fact, "Give her something to eat." The kindness of Jesus matched his power.—R. C. Gillie.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE WORKS OF FAITH

Beginning the Lesson

Suppose you leave the figure of the Savior out of this fifth chapter of Mark, some one suggests. What a hideous chronicle it then becomes, a haunting list of

miseries, a chaos of catastrophes! Out of the tombs a man with a devil, out of a house a man with a broken heart, out of the crowd a woman with a terrible disease, and presently, out of the house a little maid in a coffin. But the entrance of Jesus turns this dark page of human tragedy into a fair and lovely gospel, just as it does everywhere in the shadowed lives of men.

"Jehovah, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them," Isaiah sings. And so it was with Jehovah's Son; people in trouble kept coming to him, and he was never too busy nor too weary to heed their prayers for help.

Jesus Treated All Alike

Early in Jesus' Judean Ministry, Nicodemus, a great man among the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, came to him for a night conference, and Jesus treated him with courtesy. Jairus, another rich man among the Jews, a ruler in the synagogue, came to him and Jesus treated him courteously, also. Both of these men belonged to the party who opposed Jesus; by the time of Jairus' importunity the Pharisees were bitterly hostile, yet this fact had no influence whatever upon the Master. Most of his visitors and supplicants were poor people, and he always treated them with equal courtesy. He sympathized with all who were in need of his help, whatever their station in life or their attitude toward him. Despite the greatness of Jairus, and the seeming need for haste in going on his errand of mercy to the latter's home, Jesus made Jairus wait while he attended to a more pressing need of a poor woman. Rich and poor, wise and ignorant, great and humble, were to Jesus alike but individuals whom he could teach and help.

The Importance Which Jesus Placed on Faith

"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," said Jesus when the centurion told him that he knew Jesus needed only to say the word, and his servant would be healed. They brought to him a man sick of the palsy, and Jesus, seeing their faith, said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." The sick woman said within herself, "If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole," and Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole." "My daughter is even now dead," said Jairus to Jesus, "but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." And in answer to that father's faith, he took the girl by the hand, and she arose. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" he questioned the blind men and they said, "Yea, Lord." "According to your faith be it done unto you," then said Jesus, and their eyes were opened.

Again and again we read of his response to the prayer of faith. He hungered for faith, was grieved when faith was lacking; rejoiced when he found it unexpectedly; fanned it into flame when it was smoldering. The father brought his epileptic boy to Jesus, and said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." And Jesus said unto him, "If *thou* canst! All things are possible to him that believeth." Straightway the father cried out and said, "I believe, help thou mine unbelief," and then Jesus cured his son. Jesus asks for faith, but well it is for us that he accepts even imperfect faith.

Faith, with Jesus, Is Personal Confidence in Himself

Constantly, Jesus uses faith as a term that is not applicable to the relation of a man to an opinion, or of a man to a thing. He uses faith as a term that is applicable only to the relation of a person to a person. I believe, not things that people tell me, I believe the people themselves, and my belief in them is faith. A little child, knowing very little of life, sits on the father's knee learning its first lessons of life, and believes what the father tells it. Now its belief in what the father says is not an act of faith, it is a fruit of faith. It is the relationship of confidence between the child and the father that makes the child believe anything the father says, and its belief in what the father tells is simply one of the accessory sequences of its faith in the father. Faith, with Jesus, is personal confidence in himself. Faith, with Jesus, is the answer of a man's soul to his soul, the touch of a man's personality upon his personality, the surrender of a willing life to Jesus Christ as its Lord and its King.—R. E. Speer, in "The Master of the Heart."

The Faith Which Jesus Wants

Jesus said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples answered, "Thou seest the multitudes thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?"

Thousands of men and women are thronging Christ in our day—studying, writing,

publishing papers and books, not scoffing and despising, but deeply interested intellectually in the questions raised, as other men are in the canals of Mars, or the properties of radium. And the artists throng him with their sketch-books, to catch every expression, every feature, every gesture, and the reporters throng him with their pencils, that the world may know in utmost variety all that he has said, or can be represented as having said; and the poets throng him with their tuneful chords, and the musicians with their glorious oratorios. Oh, the world is resounding with his name! All science, all art, all literature knows him historically, intellectually, and presses about him as the most commanding, the most absorbing, the most potential fact in the history of the race. But what is it all—what is it, to him who came into the world not as a wonder, but as a Savior; not to engage intellects, but hearts; not to engage admiration, but love; who came into the world to save sinners, and who waits unsatisfied, longing, until he feels the touch of some humble finger of faith and love? It may be a very weak and trembling touch, reaching out of darkness, out of misery, but if simple faith in him as the only helper guides the hand, the heart of Jesus asks no more.—J. A. Chambliss, in The Examiner.

A Woman Touched his Garment

How Faith Helped Where Cure Was Impossible

"For the past five years I have watched over a patient who suffered agony from his wounds. Recently he died shrieking, 'If God is merciful and powerful, why does he permit evil? There is no God, is there, Miss Foster?' He asked me that question many times, but I could not answer him. I wished—Grandfather, how would you have answered? But what do you know of evil and suffering, protected and sheltered as you have always been?"

Mr. Foster's eyes remained steady and confident. "I am no longer sheltered and protected," he began quietly. "The present economic conditions have depleted my little bank balance, and it will not see me through. Two weeks ago an X-ray examination revealed—a stomach cancer. You know the suffering I may have to endure."

"You, too, Grandfather! You who never harmed anyone, you who have trusted in your God!"

"Would you have me join the ranks of cowards and whine? God could have arranged matters at the beginning so that no man could possibly injure his neighbor,—my property has depreciated through the dishonesty of those who control certain affairs,—and he could have protected me from disease. But what merit in faith if there were no cause to doubt? How become unselfish if you could never make a sacrifice? How be merciful if no one ever sinned against you? How show courage and loyalty if you never stood in danger of persecution? Ah, how produce heroes and martyrs or even plain honest men without the conditions that cultivate and test their distinctive qualities? My faith—my old-fashioned faith—rests upon a firm foundation. It will never fail me."

John Foster forgot his granddaughter. She arose and placed upon the ancient parlor organ the hymn book from which she had learned when a child that exultant expression of faith, "How firm a foundation."

"After I have sung it I must return to the hospital," she whispered. "There is another patient there who asked me that question, and I must answer it for him at once to save his mind. He is the sort that will listen and believe."

"If I had not been called upon to suffer I could not have answered you as I did," John Foster said simply.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Christian attitude toward death. She Chapter XXI of Christ and Man, by Marcus Dods; Chapter XXXVI of The Principles of Jesus, by Robert E. Speer.

2. The responsiveness of Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do we know about The Twelve? 2. What types of men were represented by The Twelve? 3. What advantage had the disciples in going out in pairs? 4. Why did Jesus bid the disciples travel without resources? 5. What is meant by the symbolic act of 6.11? 6. Do you believe that every follower of Christ today is sent forth to do a definite work for his Master?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

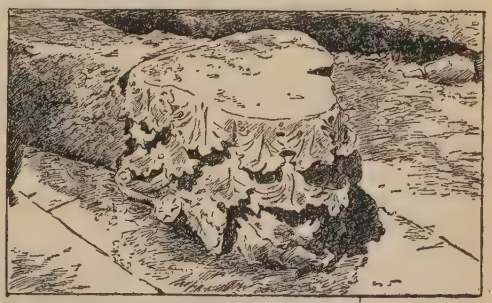
JESUS THE GIVER AND PRESERVER OF LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist, called the fifth chapter of Mark "the high water mark of that Gospel," for here there are three persons who are "very far gone," one possessed of devils, another possessed of incurable disease, and the third one dead. "If we had them with us now, we would put the first in the mad-house, the second in a hospital for incurables, and the third one in the grave," Mr. Moody said, "but Christ was a match for the whole three." There was no limit to the power of Jesus to heal and bless.

A hurry call came to a physician on Long Island the other day. The patient was seven miles away across the Sound, and no boat could be had. But there was a hydroplane near, and the physician begged its use for his errand of mercy. In seven minutes he was at the patient's bedside.

A hurry call came to Jesus one day. The case was urgent. What was it? Who was Jairus? What did he do before he made his request of Jesus? How can you explain this act on the part of a proud ruler of a synagogue? Jesus started for the ruler's home, but he was delayed on the way. How? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)



A Corinthian Capital of a Double Column of a Synagogue Found at Capernaum

Talitha, Cumi

One day the surgeon in charge of our hospital at Jerusalem invited me to be present at an operation. He had found a Syrian girl about fourteen years of age hobbling about on crutches. She had never walked. The good physician took compassion on her.

When she was under the ether I saw that a congenital deformity in both limbs had crippled her for life—or so it doubtless seemed to all who knew her. Then the merciful knife of the skillful surgeon touched the constricting ligaments. In sure but powerful hands the bones were forced into their natural places, the deformed feet reduced to their normal shape. Stout bandages and plaster casts were used; there followed the bewildered awakening, and the long days in the hospital waiting for Nature to do the rest.

Then came the morning when the deep Syrian eyes opened and looked up into the smiling eyes of the good physician. I did not hear him say, *"Talitha, cumi,"* yet his words were no less certain, no less comforting to the parents who stood beside the little white cot. For "her feet and ankle bones received their strength," and she went "walking and leaping and praising God" through the streets of the Holy City.—The Living Church.

They Get Back Their Dead

"O, daddy, it's mudder!" the four-year-old boy's voice was clear as a bell. "I want to go, daddy. I'll come back for you folks. I'll get mudder, an' we'll come back to get you all. I'm not 'fraid now. You'll get me back some day, daddy, an' then—"

The stricken father laid his child's head back upon the pillow, and folded the quiet hands. For fifteen years he had tried to do a man's work as a missionary to the land of the Hermit Kingdom. Four months before, "mudder," after an illness of ten days, had said to him, "I'll get you all back some day," and had left them.

And now "boy," the most loved and petted member of the family, had taken the dreaded fever and he, too, had gone.

Riding to the cemetery in his curtained chair the frantic father heard voices. "What are you crying about?" one Korean woman asked another.

"Why I'm crying for the foreigner, because he lost his boy."

"Don't cry for the foreigner! He doesn't need your tears," said Kin-si in a choked voice. "Don't you know that all these foreigners have a way by which they get their dead back again after they have died? That foreigner will get his wife and boy back again some day. But how about us? I lost a boy. You lost a boy. We'll never get our boys back again. We don't know how to get our dead back. I wish we had such a hope. But it's only for the foreigners."

"She's heard but half the truth," thought the man. "O my heavenly Father," he cried chokingly, "forgive me. Take my boy. He's yours. Take his mother. Keep them safely until the years allotted to me have passed. 'Foreigners get their dead back.' So do the Koreans, but they do not know it! Help me, Father, to tell the whole of Korea that they, too, get their dead back."

After the little casket was lowered the father picked up an Easter lily and dropped it into the grave. "Thou art the resurrection and the life," his voice rang out clear and strong. "All hail, Easter day. And this Easter lily is the symbol of the resurrection from the dead of my boy. As I give him back to thee, Father, I claim at thy hands the resurrection life for every Korean, from now henceforth and forever. I'll help thee to bring it to pass, Lord, for so it will be good in thy sight, for thou art their resurrection and their life."

His friends wondered at his face, for it shone with a radiance not of the earth. "He's had a vision," and they were right. His vision was of a heart-hungry, Easterless land, made radiant with the heart knowledge of the man Christ Jesus, the Korean's resurrection and their life.—Minerva L. Guthapfel.

The Importance of Medical Missions

"A medical missionary is a missionary and a half," declared Dr. Moffat, the father-in-law of Dr. Livingstone. "All missionary work must be in the highest sense a healing work," said Mackay of Uganda. Medical mission work is important in itself, but more important as a means to an end. "We do not fear your Christian schools, for we need not send our children," a Hindu explained to a missionary. "We do not fear your preaching, for we need not listen. But we do dread your Christian physicians, for they enter our homes and help us, and gain our hearts, and then we must hear them teach the religion of Jesus Christ."

There is no name in the Korean language suitable for the missionaries. When they first began their work in Korea the question arose, What should they be called? After watching them for a time the Koreans put together a word which means "the Jesus-Doctrine-Doing People." How true a name it is!

Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, the great traveler, gave this testimony to the work of the missionary: "To my thinking no one follows so closely in the Master's footprints as the medical missionary, and on no agency for alleviating human suffering can one look with more satisfaction. The medical mission is the outcome of the living teachings of our faith. I have now visited such missions in many parts of the world and never saw one that was not healing, helping, blessing, softening prejudice, diminishing suffering, making an end of many of the cruelties which proceed from ignorance, restoring sight to the blind, limbs to the crippled, health to the sick, telling in every work of love and of consecrated skill of the infinite compassion of him who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them."

Sentence Sermon

Doer of deeds divine,
Thou the Father's Son,
In all thy children may
Thy will be done,
Till each works miracles
On poor and sick and blind,
Learning from thee the art
Of being kind.—W. J. Dawson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Name the twelve disciples. 2. Which of the disciples were fishermen? 3. Which was a tax-gatherer? 4. Which became a traitor? 5. Why did Jesus choose The Twelve? 6. What was the meaning of the symbolic act mentioned in 6.11? 7. Why did Paul and Barnabas once shake off the dust from their feet as recorded in Acts 13? 8. What is the value of companionship in work? 9. How large is Galilee where The Twelve went to preach, and how does it compare in size with your State?

LESSON X—MARCH 4

JESUS AND THE TWELVE

GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16.15

LESSON Mark 1.16-20; 2.13, 14; 3.13-19; 6.7-13, 30

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 12.1-8

MARK 3.13 And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him. 14 And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, 15 and to have authority to cast out demons:

MARK 6.7 And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits; 8 and he charged them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; 9 but *to go* shod with sandals: and, *said he,* put not on two coats. 10 And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. 11 And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them. 12 And they went out, and preached that *men* should repent. 13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CHOICE OF THE TWELVE, 3.13, 14. One day Jesus went up the mountain to pray; he continued there all night in prayer, Luke tells us. Then as companions for himself and as messengers to the people he chose from among all his followers a little company of twelve men. "The number is significant and symbolical, a clear allusion to the tribes of a new Israel. And by that choice of twelve Christ did two things: (1) he made a stupendous claim for himself. Every Jew knew in a moment what the choice of twelve implied. It implied that Jesus was the promised and long-expected Messiah. It meant that he was the fulfilment of ancient prophecy. And (2) it provided the apostles themselves with a constant stimulus to devotion and support of faith. It carried their minds back to the promises" (J. D. Jones).

They were ordinary men, these twelve, men from the ordinary ranks of life. Four of them were fishermen, one was a tax-collector. It was the power of the gospel that it built up its mission on the lives of ordinary men, G. K. Chesterton says. It took ordinary men and made of them apostles, missionaries, evangelists, martyrs.

"Jesus found twelve ordinary men and discovered extraordinary capacity in them. They had had little opportunity. He became their opportunity. They did not have a great past. He saw that they could have a great future. He judged them by the spot where the Infinite touched them. He lived with them. He talked to them, and then he gave them something to do. He knew that only when listening is turned into action does it become character. He made them heralds of the Kingdom, and they grew in stature even as they announced its coming" (Lynn H. Hough).

Dr. F. B. Meyer divides the disciples into three groups. In the first are the men of action and leadership—Peter, John, James and Andrew. In the second are the men who reasoned, questioned and doubted—perhaps they might be called the contemplative group—Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. In the third are the men of practical and political tendencies—James, Thaddæus, Simon and Judas.

Jesus chose The Twelve that "they might be with him." He wanted friends. He needed their companionship and their sympathy. On his last night with them, he said to them, "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations." But it was more for their sakes than for his own sake that Jesus wanted them with him. They were to live with him and learn from him, and then they were to go out and teach others how to live as he had lived. Their fellowship was to lead to service. Their calling was with a view to their sending. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide," Jesus told them when he was about to be crucified.

"What an appeal to our lives! that when we were born God meant something by it; that the call of The Twelve is but a special example of the universal truth that God never made any man without intending to do some-

thing with him; that God has not made one more man than he wants to use, and so, that when one man is faithless God's work is hampered; that there is a place for everyone, and if you are not in your place, your place is empty. What a dignity comes to our lives when we can feel in even a far-off way what Jesus said, 'I came not of myself. My Father sent me'" (Harry Emerson Fosdick).

The power Jesus would give his disciples was great—they were to proclaim the good news and to expel evil influence, to heal the bodies of men. "To have authority to cast out demons" stands as typical of all manner of healing.

"Jesus did not ignore physical need. His disciples were not to ignore physical need. The Christian can never ignore the physical need of the bodies of men. And if today he thinks more and more of prevention, more and more of changing the conditions which dwarf and deplete and destroy the body, he is only applying the spirit of the Master to that world of classified and specialized knowledge in which he lives" (Lynn H. Hough).

II. THE TWELVE SENT FORTH, 6.7-11. After The Twelve had been long enough with Jesus to learn his purpose and spirit, he sent them forth two by two to impart their knowledge to others. Two of them working together would be more than doubled in effectiveness, for "one and one are more than twice one." And he gave them authority over the unclean spirits. They were to heal as well as preach.

"Were the Founder of Christianity to return to earth and live in our land—a land which in distinction to Palestine, is a land of Christian civilization, where the slow processes of scientific method have supplanted the swiftness of the ancient miracles—I doubt not that he would say to his people today: 'Go ye into all the world; announce the glad tidings to every creature; heal the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, found asylums, teach the trades, show the natives how to utilize God's laws of nature, seek to unfold man in the totality of his being—spirit and soul and body" (George Dana Boardman).

Jesus bade the disciples take nothing with them but a staff. They were to take no bread, for the laborer is worthy of his hire, as Jesus said when he sent forth the seventy (Lk. 10.7); no wallet—the leathern bag in which food and other things were carried (see Light from Oriental Life); no money in their purse, no girdle. They were to wear sandals, not shoes, which were costly, and they were not to wear two tunics, as was the custom of the well-to-do in their day. In short, they were to have no definite means of support, but were to depend for food and shelter upon the people among whom they labored. As some one sagely remarks, the chief point about their equipment was that there was to be so little of it! They were to travel light. It has been suggested that there may have been religious orders in Christ's day, as there were later in the Middle Ages, who begged in a shameless way and became a burden to the people, and this was the reason that Jesus stressed this point of the disciples' being simple in their habits and ways, and making it plain that they came not to get but to give.

Coat (Tunic) and Cloak

This was not to be their course always, for in his last talk with them (Lk. 22.35, 36) Jesus asked, "When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lacked ye anything?" and they said, "Nothing." And he said unto them, "But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his wallet." They had by that time learned their lesson of trustfulness and could expedite their work by having some resources to fall back upon.

A contributor to one of our denominational papers calls attention to the fact that today the best trained men go to the largest paid pulpits and the

multitudes who belong to poor churches lack strong leadership. He admits that ministers have responsibilities to their families, and calls upon the young men to face the economic insecurity of the small churches for three or four years and give them the needed religious leadership. "The need of our country at this moment," he writes, "is for college men graduating from the seminaries of all denominations to sail by the Charybdis of promotion and the Scylla of the best salary offered, to a three-year sacrificial service in a poorly paid parish. They would not starve.. The knowledge of such a surrender of earning capacity for the sake of a cause will give incontestable credentials. After the wonder has passed 'that a man any good would come here,' he will become the recognized leader in every line, civic and social as well as religious."

Into whatever home the disciples entered, there they were to stay as long as they remained in that place. The customary way was to go from house to house for hospitality, but this consumed time and their time was precious. They were not to pick and choose. Whatever shelter and food were given them, they were therewith to be content.

"With what enormous advantage many of the messengers of the King might ponder these express injunctions laid upon the first apostles. How much time and strength are wasted in the conventionalities of this fussy age. And, far worse, how much influence is paralyzing" (G. C. Morgan).

Wherever they were not received, wherever their message was not listened to, they were to depart and shake off the dust from their feet as they went. This was a symbolical act which meant that they were free from all responsibility in regard to the failure of the people to receive their message. They were to be prepared for rejection and were not to be disheartened.

"If these instructions given by Christ were to be condensed into a single word, it would be the word 'consecration.' What he was requiring of the disciples was a complete abandonment of all other things in their dedication to his work. Their whole strength was to be put into it; their support was to come from it; their reception or rejection as they went was to depend on it; they were to be missionaries and nothing else. And though the succeeding centuries have altered many things, still this remains the essential spirit of the missionary."

III. THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR OF THE TWELVE, 6.12, 13. The disciples went forth on their missionary tour as Jesus bade them. They preached the gospel of repentance, and healed many that were sick. They learned by doing. "It is interesting to discover the apostles' use of a customary medical method of that day in the shape of anointing with oil, when they performed their miracles of healing. The only other reference to this method is in Jas. 5.14. It has been stereotyped by some as a ritual enjoined by our Lord in the treatment of the sick. But there is no trace of this in the New Testament. Both references are interpreted better by looking on it simply as an approval of any means at hand to give bodily relief. This does not invalidate a prayer of faith. Rather, it should make us free to pray more confidently. The rule is always the same, 'Exhaust the human possibilities of a situation and then trust God for what is humanly impossible' " (R. C. Gillie).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

No wallet, 6.8. Most commentators think of this as a traveling bag. But there is a special meaning suggested by one of the monuments. This monument was erected in the Roman Imperial period at Kefr-Hauar in Syria by a person who calls himself in the Greek inscription, a "slave" of the Syrian goddess. "Sent by the lady," as he says himself, this heathen apostle tells of the journeys on which he went begging for the "lady," and boasts triumphantly that "each journey brought in seventy bags." The word here employed clearly means the beggar's collecting-bag. The same special meaning would make excellent sense in our text; there is to be no earning, and also no begging of money.—Dr. Adolf Deissmann, in Light from the Ancient East.

No money in their purse, 6.8. The traveler used a girdle for a twofold purpose: first to gird his loins, and so keep out of his way the folds of his long,

flowing robes, which would have hindered his progress; and, second, to carry his money. Gold, silver, and even small coins were habitually carried in the girdle. Devotees never went on a journey without taking with them the book of the law.—Edmond Stapfer, in Palestine in the Time of Christ.

Oriental Shoe, Sandal, Staff and Wallet

There abide till ye depart thence, 6.10. The reason is very obvious to one acquainted with oriental customs. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, usually invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of such hospitality is frequently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds amongst neighbors. It also consumes much time, causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity, and in every way counteracts the success of a spiritual mission.—W. A. Thomson, in The Land and The Book.

Shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them, 6.11. It was customary for a Jew to wipe the dust from his feet when passing from a heathen land into his own. He who would not receive the apostles was as unworthy as the heathen.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Which of the disciples were especially favored? How? What miracles have the disciples witnessed? What lessons have they had?

The Choosing of The Twelve

The first disciples were called by Jesus soon after his baptism and temptation. Early in his Galilean Ministry he chose The Twelve for the privileges and responsibilities of constant, intimate companionship. Thereafter much of his time was spent in teaching them and preparing them to take up his work. What we call the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew is probably the record of what he taught them at various times.

The Sending Forth of The Twelve

It was when the popularity of Jesus was at its height, and there was need for more laborers in the field that was white for the harvest, that Jesus sent the disciples forth on a tour of teaching and healing. This was an important step in their special training, when they themselves were to learn in their efforts to teach others.

They were sent out in pairs, therefore on six different circuits, and in a tour of several weeks' duration they may have covered Galilee fairly well, for the district is only sixteen hundred square miles in area. Our State of Delaware is larger by only three hundred and sixty square miles.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus chose The Twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach. They could not have taught others had they not companied with him. The Christian worker must be trained as those Twelve were trained. He cannot teach others about Christ unless he has himself sat at the Master's feet and learned of him. He cannot give out what he does not possess. His words will be as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal who tries to teach others the way of Christ without a personal knowledge of that way. Our schools need well-educated, well-trained teachers, but they need above all teachers of whom it can be said as was said of the apostles, "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

It is a great thing to guide pupils in the school of Christ and be the instruments he uses to lead them to choose him as their Master and Lord. There is a possibility that some are capable of being his special messengers to aid him in advancing the Kingdom of God on this earth. Would it not be a splendid thing if to some in your

class he should say, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men"? "Without a shadow of doubt the dearth of workers who are actuated with a constant sense of their vocation is due to lack of prayer on the part of Christians," cried John R. Mott, that pre-eminent Christian worker. This is what he counsels: "Have the officers and teachers of the Sunday-school from time to time unite in prayer that the Holy Spirit may separate from among the young those whom God would have one day preach Christ where he has not been named. Exhort parents to pray that their own children may be guided into the work of God's own appointment. Influence young men and women in the church to make the choice of their life work a matter of special prayer until God's will is made clear."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

Beginning the Lesson

"The Training of The Twelve" is our special topic today. What do we know about them individually? Let us note what manner of man each one was. Five of them we have met already, Peter and Andrew, James and John, and Matthew. The first two are rude fishermen. Peter is the man of impulse, quick to act, prone to fall. Andrew is his brother—that seems to be his chief distinction, that and the fact that he brought his brother to Christ. The second pair of brothers, James and John, are also fishermen by trade. John we recognize as a thoughtful man, the opposite of Peter in disposition. Matthew is the shrewd business man, the despised publican. Then there are the matter-of-fact Philip; Bartholomew, who is doubtless the guileless Nathanael, who wondered if any good could come out of Nazareth; and Thomas, the man whose mind is convinced with difficulty, but whose heart is ready to follow and suffer with his Master. Of three others we cannot mention a single characteristic, for they are but names to us: James the son of Alphæus and Thaddæus and Simon the Canaanean. The last of The Twelve is Judas Iscariot, who became the arch-traitor.

None of them were great or learned men; most of them were poor; all of them were obscure save Matthew, who was known and despised; "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, were called," but they were men of spiritual possibilities; they were malleable in the hands of their Master; and they became "the glorious company of the apostles."

Dr. J. D. Jones points out the differences among The Twelve. "Do you want difference of temperament?" he questions. "Then you have it, say, in Peter and John—Peter the man of action, John the man of prayer. Peter the man of bold, impulsive, eager spirit; John the man of quiet, contemplative, loving heart. Do you want difference in spiritual gift? You have it, say in Nathanael (or Bartholomew) and Thomas. Nathanael of a believing soul, and Thomas of a sceptical spirit. Nathanael ready easily to say, "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." Thomas slow to credit the asseverations of all his fellow disciples, and saying sadly, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Do you want difference of political opinion? Well, you have it in its most extreme and violent form in the contrast between Matthew and Simon the Canaanean. Matthew the publican, and Simon the Zealot; Matthew the servant of the Roman Government, and Simon the rebel against it; Matthew the tax-gatherer, and Simon the tax-hater; Matthew who wore the livery of Rome, and Simon who had drawn sword against it. And when I read this list, with its amazing contrasts, with its Peter and its John, with its Bartholomew and its Thomas, with its Matthew and Simon, I know it is true that Christ is willing to receive men into his church and into his service of the most diverse temperament, qualities and gifts."

They all were "ventures of faith" on the part of the Master, as Bruce Barton puts it. "Would they win out over the evil elements in their natures? Would fickleness give place to stability? Would hot temper and narrow intolerance be overcome by the spirit of love? Would the changing moods of high courage and of utter despondency be replaced by that serenity of spirit which walks the way of duty and does not faint? It would all depend upon the personal response which each man should make to the offer of divine help brought within his reach."

The Twelve in Training

When Jesus sent them forth on their preaching and healing missions, he did this that they might learn by doing. They had companied with him and learned of him.

"They went in with him that they might go out for him. They studied that they might teach, they learned that they might do and achieve. They became disciples that they might become apostles." The writer of these last words adds by the way: "This is the true order, though it is sometimes reversed. Some men became apostles and prophets immediately. They do not last long nor amount to much."

The wisdom of Jesus' plan in sending them out two by two, and the influence each thus had upon the other, is told by F. W. Boreham:

"There is no evidence that Jesus relied much upon conferences, conventions, congresses, and the like. As a permanent factor in character-building he trusted to the influence of a companion rather than to the inspiration of a crowd. He was a great believer in those walks side by side, along the winding Galilean highways. He attached extraordinary value to those heart-to-heart talks beneath the over-arching branches, when the tired comrades camped together at the close of a long and tiring day. He trusted in the impress of character upon character.

"And so, all through the ages, he has been pairing them off. He began it when he sent them forth, two this way, and two that way, along the dusty lanes of Palestine. And he kept it up. Here you have Peter and John; there you have Paul and Silas; yonder you have Barnabas and Mark. Later on you have the stories of Luther and Melanchthon; of Latimer and Ridley; of John and Charles Wesley; and of a host of similarly felicitous couplings. The Franciscan friars, the Dominican monks, the Lollard preachers, the traveling pairs of evangelists, all furnish corroborative evidence of the wisdom of Christ's plan. The Pope and General Booth had little in common; but they both saw the advantage of sending out their emissaries two by two. The sisters may wear convent garb or coal-scuttle bonnets; it does not matter; the principle is the same."

They Were Shod with Sandals

There were three classes of people in Palestine. The slaves went barefoot; the grandees wore elaborate shoes; the working classes wore sandals. Therefore, said the Master to his men, "be shod with sandals." All through the ages the pendulum of ecclesiastical fashion has been swinging between bare feet and golden slippers. From the excessive worship of unholy revelries, to which the Roman world was abandoned, the Christians of the first century went to the opposite extremity, and courted persecution by their rigid abstinence from and their severe condemnation of, the most legitimate and necessary pleasures. Back again swung the pendulum, until the churches became the scenes of voluptuous luxury and extravagance. We read on, and the next chapters of our ecclesiastical histories bring us to the story of the monks and the hermits. We no sooner discover an age of unexampled self-indulgence, than we straightway come upon the Puritanism that banned Pilgrim's Progress as a wanton frivolity, and that denounced the Fairy Queen as a wicked and devilish invention! And so we go on. One day Christ's minister would go barefooted like a slave; the next he must needs affect a pair of golden slippers. There was a time when the Church gloried in her poverty; her emissaries wore no shoes on their feet; they dressed in rags and tatters; they ate the berries of the hedgerow; they drank the waters of the wayside spring. And then, hey, presto! the scene is changed. The Church gloried in her wealth. All the world paid tribute to the popes. Rome rolled in riches; and her proud bishop, Innocent the Fourth, laughed as he looked upon his countless hoards and boasted that never again need the Church lament that of silver and gold she had none! Let your moderation be known unto all men. Be shod with sandals!—F. W. Boreham, in Rubble and Roseleaves.

The Need of Able Ministers

Jesus Christ is worthy of the best the nation has, and he needs able men, with strong bodies, alert minds and pure hearts to do his work in ministering to the world.

At one time Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Amherst and other leading colleges sent a large percentage of their sons into the ministry. This is not so today. In recent decades the smaller denominational institutions have taken a far lead in providing these men. In some of our Western States it is reported that more men without college training are now ordained as ministers than those who have had academic study. This question demands thought and the thought of men who are now studying in our American colleges. Here is a field which needs more of strength and character. Men are succeeding in the ministry who could and would succeed anywhere, and are in countless instances giving up opportunities which are attractive, fascinating and lucrative.

The ministers and missionaries, above all other men, are set apart to proclaim and reveal the mystery and truth of life and death to men, and yet no other calling is looked upon so indifferently by the majority of men and students. No work nor calling exists which compares with the minister's opportunity to set in perpetual motion moral and worthy forces centering in the very life of the future and an eternal future.—John Timothy Stone, in Places of Quiet Strength.

Gaining Recruits for Christ

The investment of time, effort, and money in the building of character is surely a paying business. This is what the Church is doing through the Sunday-school by leading boys and girls and young people through the study of God's Word to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ.

This world can never be won for God by winning men and women. The children must be won or the case is hopeless.

Childhood is the easiest and most favorable time for soul-winning. More than half, probably nearer three-fourths, of the additions to the churches in North America, by conversion, come through the Sunday-schools.

Childhood is the best time to begin the Christian life because it affords a longer period of Christian service.

The Sunday-school is the whitest part of the Church's great white field and its best evangelizing agency.—From a Leaflet issued by The International Sunday School Association.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Pen-portraits of The Twelve. See book with this title by Bernard C. Clausen.

2. The laborer is worthy of his hire. Should religious work be done with no thought of the wages? See Chapter entitled The Money Test of Character, in Robert Speer's book, Seeking the Mind of Christ.

3. The program of the disciples. See Chapters IV, V, and VI of In the School of Christ, by William J. McDowell. Chapter XVI of The Life of Christ, by W. J. Dawson; The Training of The Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the purpose of Jesus in performing his miracle? 2. How does this multiplication of the loaves differ from the multiplication of grain according to God's laws in nature? 3. Read the words Jesus spoke to the multitude the day after this miracle, Jn. 6.22-65. 4. Are we doing all we can individually and as a class to help human need?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS' CALL TO SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson

Jesus chose twelve disciples. For what purpose? That they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. They were to be trained so that they could take up his work when he laid it down. *Decendo discimus* is a Latin saying which means "We learn by teaching." Said a professor to a girl who could not understand mathematics, "Take a pupil in mathematics." Jesus sent his pupils out to teach others after he had been teaching them for some time. He did this partly for the good they could do, but more, probably, for the good that would come to them from this preaching tour. They were to learn by teaching. What directions did he give them as they were about to set out? Why were they to take nothing with them? Why did he give them the direction of verse 10?

The First Missionary Tour

So they went out, two by two, and did as Jesus bade them. Very important they felt, as they set out alone, and rather nervous and excited, but pleased to think that their Master trusted them. Let us follow two of them, and see what they would do.

As they entered one of the villages, they would perhaps see two or three people sitting under the shade of a big tree, and would sit down beside them, and begin to talk to them, asking them if they had seen Jesus of Nazareth when he came down that way. Perhaps one of the men might remember having seen Jesus and he would remind the others how Jesus cured one of their neighbors of his sickness. Then they would ask the disciples, "Do you know this Jesus of Nazareth? Is he coming again to our village?" and the disciples would answer, "Not just now, but

he has sent a message by us which we can give you if you will bring your friends to listen."

As the crowd gathered round them, the brown-faced children running up, too, to see what it was all about, first one and then the other disciple told what Jesus had taught him about the Kingdom of Heaven. Then one in the crowd would, perhaps, say: "I wish Jesus himself were here, I have a sick child at home. Can you heal the sick?" And Peter or Philip or James would answer, "Take us to your home and we will cure the child, for Jesus has given us the power to do this"; and the crowd would follow to the door. The disciples would enter, saying, "Peace be to this house," and for the rest of their time in the village they would be asked to make that house their home, out of thankfulness that they had healed the child.

But the missionary tour would not always be pleasant. Sometimes the disciples would be laughed at and mocked and sometimes even chased out of the village. But even then they did not give up, but went to another place and began again, remembering all that had happened in every place that they might tell Jesus all about it when they got back again.—Grace Winter.

What Training Did for The Twelve

What a list! Not a single well-known person on it. Nobody who had ever made a success of anything. A haphazard collection of fishermen and small-town business men, and one tax-collector—a member of the most hated element in the community. What a crowd!

Having gathered together his organization, there remained for Jesus the tremendous task of training it. And herein lay a great element in his success—his vast, unending patience. The Church has attached to each of the disciples the title of Saint, and thereby done much to destroy the conviction of their reality. They were very far from sainthood when he picked them up. For three years he had them with him day and night; his whole energy and resources poured out in an effort to create an understanding in them. Yet through it all they never fully understood. But Jesus never lost his patience. He believed that the way to get faith out of men is to show that you have faith in them; and from that great principle of executive management he never varied.

The voice of the Master was stilled at the cross, but the power carried on. It withstood prisons and scourging; shipwreck and weariness; public condemnation and the loss of personal friends; chains, and the roar of lions and blows. James was the first to die. Herod Agrippa killed him. John, imprisoned for years on the stony island of Patmos, suffered martyrdom. Andrew died on the cross whose pattern bears his name to this day. Simon Peter insisted that he be crucified head downward, deeming himself unworthy to suffer in the manner of his Lord.

Just a few brief years and every member of the original organization was gone, but "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." The Master's training had done its work. The great Idea prevailed. The Master picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world.—Condensed from The Man Nobody Knows, by Bruce Barton.

One Way in Which All Christ's Followers May Preach

There is a good story about Francis of Assisi. One day he asked a Franciscan brother to go out preaching with him. They went through the streets and the crowded market place and then back to their own door. "But I thought we went to preach!" the brother wonderingly exclaimed as they entered the building. "We have been preaching all the time," St. Francis returned. "When the children teased us, and we only met them with smiles; when they jostled us in the market and we were not rough in return; when some spoke rudely to us, and we answered gently; when we carried the old woman's bundle for a while—we were preaching. It is no good going out to preach unless we preach as we go."

Sentence Sermons

We are all missionaries, the sent ones of the King; and not our fields but our faithfulness matters.—George L. McKay.

We are here as apprentices to learn the art of service.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where in the other Gospels is this miracle told? 2. What was the purchasing power of a shilling? (See footnote of your Bible.) 3. What other miracle wrought by Jesus consisted in multiplying a small supply? 4. What other instances of Christ's compassion can you give? 5. Is our class doing all it can to help others?

LESSON XI—MARCH 11

JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDES

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6.35

LESSON Mark 6.31-44; 8.1-10 DEVOTIONAL READING Ezekiel 34.11-16

MARK 6.31 And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. 33 And *the people* saw them going, and many knew *them*, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. 34 And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent; 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat. 37 But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat? 38 And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go *and* see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39 And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41 And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42 And they all ate, and were filled. 43 And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. 44 And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE NEED FOR REST, verses 31, 32. The disciples returned from their mission tour (last lesson) flushed with success, but they were greatly wearied and needed rest. They needed likewise an opportunity for taking counsel with their Master. Neither rest nor communion was possible, however, so great was the crowd that continually came and went about Jesus. They had no leisure even to eat, Mark tells us. "Come ye yourselves apart unto a desert place and rest a while," Jesus bade. Accordingly, they set off in their boat with him for an uninhabited spot (for this is the meaning here of the word *desert*) on the other side of the lake.

There come times in the lives of all Christian workers when they need to heed this counsel of Christ to go apart and rest a while. Rest is not the regular program: it is only the temporary expediency. Worn bodies and weary brains must be given a chance to recover if they are to do effective service. He maketh us to lie down in green pastures: he restoreth our souls. Dr. Jowett recalls how Ruskin after a time spent in some great art gallery found that his eyes were irritated and confused by the changing colors and the accuracy and sanity of his artistic discernment were lost. To correct all this he carried in his pocket a tablet of neutral hue, the restful color of the meadows, and gazed upon it until the bewilderment passed away and the keenness of his perception was restored. "In a certain real way he went apart, and in the retirement he found a new competency for his work. And surely in our own day, when the rush of life is so fierce, when everything is so intense, when our besetting interests are so manifold, and often so glaring and bewildering, it is imperative that we get apart and correct our moral and spiritual vision. The strain impairs our powers, and they need the rest of the neutral tints."

II. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS, verses 33, 34. The crowds who saw them depart could not be escaped. The people hastened on foot around the northern end of the lake and outsped the boat. Those from the near by cities were augmented by others from far away who were going to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. Notwithstanding the untimeliness of their coming, Jesus had compassion on them, because they were without right leadership, they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he gave up his rest to teach them. Whoever came to him, he would in no wise cast out; a crowd was ever to him an opportunity; no matter how wearied he was or how important the teaching which the people interrupted, he always uncomplainingly and gladly turned to them with compassion.

"When Jesus heard their interrupting voices, he knew to what duty he was summoned at that moment. When in the light of this example we try to interpret interruptions we perceive that the minor ones, the manifold petty distractions, may mean discipline for us. Thus one may learn self-control, patience, and serenity of spirit. These are lessons of such importance that we may well consider whether they may not be more worth while than the particular business in which we are engaged. After all, the supreme accomplishment is the living of a high and noble life. To that end all our interruptions may be made to minister" (George Hodges).

III. THE SUPPLY FOR THE MULTITUDE, verses 35-39. As evening drew near, the disciples came to Jesus and asked him to send the crowd away that they might buy something to eat in the country and villages round about, for they could get nothing in the uninhabited region where they were. (Recall the conversation with Philip, given in John 6.5-7.)

"Give ye them to eat," was Jesus' answer. "Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?" then they asked. The Greek word, *denarion,* translated *shilling,* denotes a coin about eight pence halfpenny, or nearly seventeen cents, the margin of our Bible tells us. A denarius was the pay for a day's labor. "The disciples placed the needs of the multitude and the insufficient supply at their command between them and their Master, instead of putting the individual power of Christ between them and the needs of the people."

"Say not, We cannot, We have nothing to give. Go to your duty, every one, and trust yourselves to him; for he will give you all supply, just as fast as you need it. Take upon you readily, have it as a law to be always doing great works—that is, works that are great to you; and this is the faith God so clearly justifies, that your abilities will be as your works. Make large adventures. Trust God for great things. With your five loaves and two fishes, he will show you a way to feed thousands" (Horace Bushnell).

"How many loaves have ye? Go and see," said Jesus. And when they knew, they said, "Five, and two fishes." It was Andrew, John tells us, who said to Jesus, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fishes." "But what are these among so many?" he added. Andrew saw the poverty of the supply; he did not see the richness of the invisible power.

Dr. Charles R. Brown has a striking sermon on "The Unrealized Possibilities in Life" in which he speaks to those who long for what they cannot seem to reach—for a fuller measure of physical strength, to be used in unselfish service; for a more complete mental unfolding; for a soul purer and truer. He reminds them how many a man is amazed when he sees how the resources of his own life are brought out as he lives in the fellowship and service of Christ. He does not know how much of a man he is until by the consecration of his purpose that purpose begins to increase.

IV. THE BANQUET IN THE DESERT PLACE, verses 39-42. Jesus directed all to sit down in groups upon the green grass. This they did, in groups of five thousand men (verse 44), besides women and children (Mt. 14.21). As some one has observed, the dinner bell was rung before the needed supply was visible. Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two dried fish, and looking up to heaven, he offered a blessing and then broke the loaves and divided the fish, giving the portions to the disciples to distribute till all had eaten to repletion.

Multiplying the Loaves

"Here was he who could do everything. What hindered him from sweeping the loaves they had with them aside, and, by a superb exercise of power, bidding the desert where they stood burst into a wilderness of fruits? But no! He brings out the poor remnant which was so little and so miserable that they had thought nothing of it. It seems as if there were two principles here. The first is the principle of continuity, what is to be must come to be by an enlargement, a development, a change and growth of old things; and the second is the principle of economy, that nothing, however little or poor, is to be wasted" (Phillips Brooks).

How shall we understand the miracle? We can all agree with Dr. Charles R. Brown who says: "It seems to me that we live and move in the presence of mystery. We cannot explain how it is that in the springtime a man may go out and cast a bushel of grain into the ground and then because it has been wrought upon by the mysterious forces of sunshine and soil, of rain and dew, go out four months later in the harvest and gather thirty, sixty, sometimes a hundredfold. Before the everlasting mystery of unfolding and expanding life wrought upon by these universal forces the wisest men stand amazed. The same beneficent hand of power and of wisdom which works in the wheat-field was at work that day by the Sea of Galilee when the hungry multitude was fed. It was at work according to methods which are at present beyond our ken, and the results transcend our immediate comprehension. In every direction where life human and divine is present, there are latent energies and unrealized possibilities waiting for the wise touch of power."

V. THE LESSON AGAINST WASTE, verse 43. When the repast was over and every one was satisfied, Jesus taught his disciples another lesson. More bread had been broken and more fish had been multiplied than could be eaten, and Jesus bade his disciples gather up the extra supply that nothing be lost, Jn. 6.12. Twelve baskets were filled—the provision baskets, which were carried, evidently, by all the disciples.

" 'That nothing be lost': these words spoken first of the broken pieces of bread are symbolic of Jesus' consuming and undying interest in fragments of every kind—of time, of manhood, of every broken thing. 'The Son of Man,' he said, speaking of himself, 'came to seek and to save that which was lost'—and the word is the same as that here used for the fragments of bread. The dearest of all to Jesus were the broken lives of men; and here, if anywhere, was the passion of his heart that nothing might be lost. The world was full of such fragments; but Jesus was the first to see how very precious they were, and how much could be done with them" (John Edgar McFadyen).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Five, and two fishes, verse 38. The loaves were of barley, Jn. 6.9. Barley bread was so coarse that it was given to Roman soldiers only as a punishment, but it was the customary food of the poor in Palestine, and therefore of Jesus and his company of disciples. The loaves of bread were very thin, round or oval in shape (the Arabs at the present day have the same "circles of bread"), and they were always broken, never cut. The fish were not fresh, but dried. The Greek word translated *fish* may be used for anything eaten with bread as a relish. "When the fellahin are on a journey or at work in the fields, they content themselves with dry bread eaten with a few figs, raisins or dried fish," says Mr. Wilson. "The midday meal of a middle-class house in Jerusalem in the first century consisted of fish from the lake, locusts baked in flour, or honey, onions, and meat. For dessert the cheapest fruits were grapes and figs. The poor had to live more moderately. The lake fishermen, in particular, rarely tasted meat; bread, hard-boiled eggs, and the produce of their fishing, with locusts and water, formed the staple of their food."

Loaves of Bread

Twelve baskets, verse 43. The baskets now used in the East resemble very much those which are represented on the monuments of Egypt. They are often like our own in shape, material and workmanship. The baskets here referred to were probably the ordinary traveling baskets which the Jews took with them on a journey. They carried their provisions in them so that they might not be polluted by eating the food of the Gentiles; and it is also said that they sometimes carried hay in them, on which they slept at night. Thus they kept aloof from the Gentiles in food and lodging. This will account for the contemptuous description which Juvenal gives of the Jews, when he represents that their household goods consisted of a basket and hay.—James Freeman, in Handbook of Bible Manners and Customs.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing Upon the Lesson

How many instances of Jesus' compassion have we studied this year?

The Time and Place of the Miracle

It was the second Passover of Christ's ministry, A. D. 28, and took place soon after the return of the disciples from their preaching tour.

The "desert place" was near Bethsaida (Lk. 9.10) on the eastern shore of the lake (Jn. 6.1). It was carpeted with grass, but was uninhabited.

The Result of the Miracle

This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. It marked a crisis in the ministry of Jesus, and therefore could not be omitted by any Evangelist. It convinced the people that Jesus is the Christ, and they sought to crown him king of Israel and to have him lead them against their Roman lords. The disciples, evidently, were nothing loth to see the efforts of the excited crowd succeed, and therefore, as Mark tells us, Jesus abruptly commanded them to embark and cross over to the western side of the lake, while he eluded the clamoring crowd and spent the night in lonely vigil and prayer on the mountain side. The next day Jesus made clear in a talk at Capernaum about himself as the Bread of Life that his aims were wholly different from those of the people. The latter were disillusioned—"they turned back and walked no more with him."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

After this miracle the multitude sought Jesus, not because they saw signs and comprehended their spiritual meanings, but because they ate the loaves and were filled. They came solely for material benefit, but their coming gave them an opportunity to gain entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us not bemoan the fact that many pupils attend the Church School for the loaves and fishes—the Christmas gifts and the picnics, the singing and the good cheer. Their coming brings them where they have opportunity of gaining the food which abides unto eternal life.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Beginning the Lesson

So familiar is our lesson event that we need not spend time in recalling its details. You will be interested, however, in Raymond Robbin's striking way of telling the main fact:—

"One day, after Jesus had preached to a big crowd of folk, out on a hillside, a long way from town, a long way from the kitchen, the disciples were afraid the people would be hungry and make trouble. So they came to him and said: 'Lord, there is a big bunch out here, and the first thing you know we shall have trouble. May they depart? Don't keep them here till they get too hungry.'

"If ever man was to get out of spiritual food something that would answer instead of bread and beef, that was the time. Did Jesus say, 'They have just heard one of the great sermons of history, let them be filled with spiritual food and not think about anything to eat'? No. He used that divine power that came down out of heaven, to make bread and fish in sufficient quantity to feed the multitude."

The Meaning of the Miracle

John gives its meaning. When the crowd followed Jesus to Capernaum the day after, he said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life which the Son of man shall give unto you. I am the Bread of Life."

We call Christ's miracles wonders, deeds that show unusual power, or signs, because they prove his unique, divine mission. They are also parables, because they illustrate in the physical realm his power in the spiritual kingdom. He satisfied the physical hunger of the five thousand by feeding them with barley bread; and this acted parable typified his power to satisfy their spiritual hunger with the Bread of Life, himself.

The Bread of Life

You cannot be a vigorous, useful Christian without plenty of nourishing soul-food. A certain man of God in old times said, "Thy words are food, and I did

eat them." Those who read little else but novels and secular newspapers, and other thin diet, soon become walking skeletons. Begin every morning with fervent prayer, and breakfast your soul on God's glorious, infallible, inspiring Book."—Theodore L. Cuyler.

To feed on Christ Is to Get His Strength into Us to Be our Strength

You feed on the cornfield and the strength of the cornfield comes into you and is your strength. You feed on the cornfield and then go and build your house, and it is the cornfield in your strong arms that builds the house, that cuts down the trees, and piles the stone, and lifts the roof into its place. You feed on Christ and then go and live your life, and it is Christ in you that helps the poor, that tells the truth, that fights the battle, and that wins the crown.

But what is this strength of Christ that comes to us? There can be only one answer: It is his character. There is no strength that is communicable except in character. It is the moral qualities of his nature that are to enter into us and be ours because we are his.

Where is the task that terrifies the man who lives by Christ? Where is the discouragement over which he will not walk? You may starve him, but he has this inner food. You may darken his life, but he has this inner light. You may make war about him, but he has this peace within. You may turn the world into a hell, but he carries his inner Heaven safely through its fiercest fires. He is like Christ himself. He has meat to eat that we know not of, and in the strength of it he overcomes at last and is conqueror through his Lord. It is possible for all of us.—Phillips Brooks.

Jesus was Moved with Compassion

These words do not indicate an occasional mood of Jesus, nor a sudden and passing emotion. They present the constant attitude and the invariable feeling of Jesus toward men. The compassion of Jesus is the expression of God's compassion toward men. Over and over again the Old Testament declares God to be full of compassion, gracious and long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He remembereth our frame; he considereth that we are dust." But it remained for Jesus to bring in his own Person the greatest proof and the highest expression of God's compassion.

That great prophecy which Jesus, at the beginning of his public life and ministry, claimed for himself, he wondrously fulfilled: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The ministry of Jesus was one of compassion. "I have compassion on the multitude." This was his habitual attitude, his invariable feeling. The expression indicates that the whole being of Jesus was profoundly moved as he regarded the multitude. The scene is an oft-repeated one in his life. Now, it is a weary, hungry, fainting multitude that calls forth the expression and exercise of his compassion. Again, the sick are the object of his compassion expressed in healing mercy and power. Now, his compassion opens the eyes of the blind. Now, he cleanses the lepers, indicating thus his compassion for sin-defiled men. Now, he casts out evil spirits, thus showing his compassion for those who are enthralled by evil. Now, he stands at the grave with the sorrowing and weeps with them, calls an only brother back to mourning sisters, or raises and restores an only son to his widowed mother, thus showing his compassion for all who mourn the loss of dear ones.

Thus everywhere and always Jesus stands before us as full of compassion. And he has in no respect changed. His attitude and feeling are the same as when he was on earth. "I will send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." In the Divine Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the compassionate Christ is still in the world, and ministers his compassion to men. He is still touched with all the feelings of human infirmities.

The deepest need of humanity is spiritual. In his compassion, Christ places himself at our disposal, first that our hunger may be appeased and our souls may live; next that we may make him known and offer him to others who, without him, must spiritually starve. Here is the mission of the church to the starving world. As the disciples were the medium through which Christ, in his compassion, fed the people, so Christians today are to be the bearers and distributors of Christ himself, the Bread of Life, to the famishing souls of men and women. His command is not to

send them away, but through him and with him, to feed them and restore them.—Condensed from a Sermon by Gorham Easterbrook.

The Motive Power of the Salvation Army

Its motive power is a genuine love of the people. When William Booth looked for the first time on the dreary horror of Whitechapel, he wrote, "I fell in love with the great crowds of people who seemed to be outside the pale of all Christian churches." He fell in love with them. They were terribly unattractive people, coarsened and debased by a most vile environment and the vilest habits. They were the despair of politicians and statesmen. They were so unused to human treatment that they would not believe in the Army, and at first found cruel sport in assaulting those who sought to help them, and mocking those who would redeem them. They were the true peril of society, and the predestined victims of the police court, the jail and the gallows. Nevertheless he loved them. He believed they could be loved out of the pit into which they had fallen. He said: "We are moral scavengers, netting the very sewers. We want all we can get, but we want most the lowest of the low." He loved them not for what they were but for what they might become. He saw Christ in them,

"Saw his Lord in his suffering brothers
And not in the clouds descending."

He saw a thousand potencies of moral beauty under the grime of evil. It is this genuine love of men which has given the Salvation Army its power and its triumph —a great love of the people and a great faith that Jesus Christ saves to the uttermost.—W. J. Dawson.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Duty not measured by ability. See a sermon with this title by Horace Bushnell.

2. How the United States met the gigantic task of helping to feed the world after the Great War.

3. The tragedy of waste. See the book with this title by Stewart Chase.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was "the tradition of the elders"? 2. Who were the elders? 3. How did Jesus teach the difference between ceremonial and real defilement? 4. What is the force of Jesus' countercharge? 5. If a man is morally bound to contribute to the support of his parents, has he the right to make this impossible by his gifts to the church or other good causes? 6. Is our Denomination in danger of formalism in worship?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS MEETING EVERYDAY NEEDS

Beginning the Lesson

Jesus and the disciples were very tired, so he said to them, "Let's take a day for rest." They took a boat and fixed the sail and turned the boat across the lake; and then there came a great crowd of people and you could just see their faces fall. "Why, there's the Master going away!" And then somebody, I don't know who, pointed a finger across the lake. "I believe he's going so and so; let's run around the lake and meet him when he gets out." And so they ran, and as the old saying is, the longer way round proved the nearer way there. When Peter shoved the boat on the sand and they got out to rest, there were five thousand men, and he said to Jesus, "A day off?" Do you think Peter screwed down his brow and said that? Do you think John said, "Can't they see the Master wants a bit of a quiet day to himself?" Do you think so? I do, because they were so much like us. But the tiredest Man of all was moved with compassion, that great heart-word used nine times of Jesus. His heart throbbed faster, and he spent the whole day in talking, preaching, helping, healing.—S. D. Gordon.

Boys who Multiplied Corn

You all know about the corn contests among boys which have been held in corn-growing states (and the canning contests among girls). Every year we hear of wonderful results attained. A few years ago Stanley Johnson gathered for the

American Magazine some stirring facts in regard to what the boys had accomplished. He told about the corn club boys of Buckeye State, twelve hundred in number, who in one summer added twenty million dollars to the productive wealth of the state of Ohio. They raised the average yield of corn per acre from thirty-five bushels to eighty-one bushels, and the business men of the State were so delighted that they sent the entire number to Washington and New York, and later to the Exposition at San Francisco.

Jerry Moore was the first world champion corn-grower. A Sunday-school boy who was asked if he knew about Jeremiah replied that he did not, and then he added, "But I know all about Jerry Moore." Jerry Moore was a fifteen-year-old Southern boy who raised over two hundred and twenty-eight bushels of corn on one acre of land. His influence led a tremendous army of boys in the Southern States (over seventy-five thousand) to organize in Corn Clubs. That year fifty-two boys in Georgia grew over a hundred bushels of corn per acre when the average yield of the farmers that year was only sixteen bushels per acre.

One boy teased his father for an acre, to emulate Jerry Moore. At last the father consented to allow the boy to have an acre on which he had to pull stumps and remove stones before it could be worked. When it was ready the father said he would take that acre himself, and the boy could get another one ready. The boy did, and when the crops were harvested, the boy's measured eighty bushels and the father's only eight! "Ever since then the old man has been going to farmer's institutes with that boy, sitting in the front seat and saying, 'Look what *me* and John went an' done.' But he is growing more corn, a boy showing him how."

How a Labrador Fisherman Met Everyday Need

"It's this way," Uncle Malcolm exclaimed when we found ourselves alone. "The cupboard is bare at last. There has been hard times these three years. The neighbors get that numerous they have driven the fur away. I got ne'er a skin last winter, and how I'm to get through this winter I can't tell. But you see how it is, doctor, it isn't ourselves we have to look out for only. There isn't a family to the westward what isn't in debt to the company, nor to the eastward either, this side the big river, and when them's hungry in winter what's them to do? They can't get no more credit, and they has got children in plenty. What's them to do? They can't go away without a bite, when them is hungry and comes here. He wouldn't do that, would he? And he wouldn't 'low his friends to either."

There was no gainsaying the difficulty. There was no denying that the Christ would have fed them. In my own mind I couldn't help fearing I should have avoided the issue; possibly by moving off the komatik track each winter, as many I knew had already done. I even ventured to suggest this, but Uncle Malcolm stood firm.

"No, no, doctor, as long as God gives me a bit, I stay right here and share it with 'em. What I'm afeared of is it won't go round this time. Still, if the Master fed thousands with a few fishes them times, I got that many anyhow, and he can make it go round. It wouldn't be much trusting him now after all these years if I just ran away up the bay wi' them fishes."

"It's you that is the real relieving officer down here," I said.

"Thank God," he replied, somewhat piqued, "I've not had to come to the gover'ment yet for help, though we has been on dry flour all summer."

"What, you are not without any fats in the house for yourself? Is that true?"

"Well, you see, doctor, they comes round first one an' then another for 'just a bit to grease the pot' till there's none left for our own pot. I thank God I doesn't have to take none till I catches what to pay for it with, but I haven't seen a bit o' butter this three months."

"You'll simply have to shut your door to them this winter then, whatever happens now, Uncle Malcolm."

He stood and looked at me and said simply: "I'll not last much longer anyhow, doctor, and please God it'll never come to that. I doesn't want to hear him say 'I was hungry and you did not feed me, a stranger and you took me not in.'"

"Well, what can you do?"

For answer he had already gone to a large seaman's chest, and, after carefully unlocking it, was feeling about among a mass of heterogeneous relics. He found what he was looking for at last and brought me a roll that proved to consist of twelve old five-dollar bills.

"What shall I do with them?" I asked. "Is this all that you have laid by for your old age?"

"Yes, doctor, it's all I has laid up and I wants it all, every bit, in flour and butter and molasses. No, it isn't me that wants it, but I've got to have it, and that's all there is about it."

"But, Malcolm, you are getting old and you shouldn't cut the last plank away yet."

"I'm seventy-three come Michelmas," he said, "and I feel more'n that, since the old woman's took, and I'm thinking maybe I won't need any flour next winter."

"But maybe you will be spared many winters yet, and if you spend all you have now, how will you take care of those years?"

"He'll take care, doctor. I guess I'll trust him. It wouldn't do not to have used that sixty dollars and have sent folks away hungry, would it, doctor? It would look as if I didn't have much trust in him. Doesn't the Book say, 'I was hungry and ye gave me nothing to eat?'"

What could be said? I mechanically took the sixty dollars and put them in my pocket and was silent. It certainly seemed to be the Master speaking.—Condensed from Down North on The Labrador, by Wilfred T. Grenfell.

How to Use Your Surplus

There is a Department of the World's Sunday School Association called "The Department for Utilizing Surplus Material." Its object is to gather from those who have excess and supply those who have need. Do you know about it? Have you contributed to its good work? If you do not know about it, write to the superintendent whose address is given on the last page of this book.

Many things have served their purpose in our Church-schools and now, though still valuable, are in danger of being lost. These are among the things which, we may be sure, Jesus would have us gather up and pass on for further usefulness. This extract from a letter received by the Superintendent of the Department from Cebu, Philippine Islands, shows how eagerly the workers there await the gifts from the Church-schools here:

"About one hundred and fifty Sunday-schools all needed Sunday-school picture-cards. The men and women who came for Sunday-school supplies waited patiently for hours until their turn came. Though some had to lose their evening meal, not one wanted to go away without the supplies. Sunday-school cards were begged for. I had not enough to give even one to each worker. With utterly inadequate supplies the workers return to their fields. Some will travel for two weeks in open boats before they can reach their fields. Others, who are still weary from two days of mountain journeying, will again face the same stony paths."

Dr. Price aptly speaks of the picture roll as "the roll that never gets stale. "These picture rolls are eagerly desired," he says, "by every missionary on every foreign field. They are used in teaching the Bible both in Sunday-schools and in the pulpit. A crowd can always be gathered on a street corner where one of these pictures is shown, and the gospel is preached with the pictured truth as the graphic text. The rolls thus become to many the very Bread of Life."

What surplus material can your class gather up? What fragments of time and of money can your class use in sending help and cheer to mission lands?

Sentence Sermons

"God gives us food that we may share
This gift with others.
May we not let another lack,
But give—to others!"

It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.—Phillips Brooks.

It is nothing but a miracle, O Lord, that thou bringest wheat forth out of the earth.—Martin Luther.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What does it mean to "walk according to the tradition"? 2. What is the number of the commandment which Jesus quotes? 3. What are some things which should be included under the verb "honor" in this commandment? 4. What one thing especially did Jesus include? 5. How was the religion of the Pharisees insincere? 6. How may we prove the sincerity of our religion?

JESUS TEACHES SINCERITY

GOLDEN TEXT: Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life. Proverbs 4.23

LESSON Mark 7.1-23

MARK 7.1 And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; 4 and *when they come* from the market place, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels.) 5 And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? 6 And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoreth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me.
7 But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men.

8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. 9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: 11 but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given *to God;* 12 ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; 13 making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24.1-6

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS VIOLATED BY THE DISCIPLES, verses 1-5. Certain Pharisees and scribes had come from Jerusalem for the express purpose, no doubt, of obtaining evidence which they could use against Jesus. They noted that the disciples ate food without first washing their hands, and one day they gathered about Jesus and asked him how it was that his disciples failed to follow the tradition of the elders, for they ate with hands defiled, ceremonially unclean because unwashed.

For the benefit of his Gentile readers, who were not familiar with Jewish customs, Mark here in verses three and four gives parenthetically an explanation. Before eating the Jews washed their hands diligently (or, up to the elbow, Revised Version). This was not because the hands were actually unclean, but because they were ceremonially unclean. When they came from the market place, where they would come in contact with people whom they regarded as ceremonially unclean, they bathed before eating. They kept also all the regulations as to the washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels.

The Jews "held the tradition of the elders." See Light from Oriental Life. Dr. Charles R. Erdman recalls the story of an imprisoned rabbi who was allowed the most meager amount of bread and water for his daily ration, and who used the water for bathing his hands instead of drinking it, saying that he had rather die than transgress the institutions of his ancestors.

"Fanaticism is easily awakened in the defense of Tradition. In the Church of Rome the ecclesiastical regulations, e.g., the Fasts and Feasts, or the celibacy of the clergy and the monastic vows, are enforced with a greater severity than the original requirements of the Gospel. The Roman Church, accepting the principle of Tradition, has made the precepts of men into doctrines to such a degree that the New Testament is rightly regarded as a danger to the laity. A passage like the one before us is subversive of Roman teaching" (R. F. Horton).

II. THE LAW OF GOD VIOLATED BY THE PHARISEES, verses 6-13. In Matthew's Gospel the connection between Christ's answer and the Pharisees' question is made plain by the words: "And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" The Pharisees accused his disciples of transgressing the tradition of the elders; Jesus in turn accuses them of transgressing the divine Law in obeying the human traditions. "Fittingly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites," Jesus said, "when he wrote of

people that honor God with their lips whose hearts are far from him. But in vain do they worship God while they teach as their doctrines the precepts of men." The passage from Isaiah 29.13 is paraphrased, not quoted. "The Savior does not mean that Isaiah was looking forward to the scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament age: he means that the prophet's utterances depicted these scribes and Pharisees to perfection" (Calvin).

"What a brave companion we have got," said Faithful to Christian concerning Talkative, who was always ready to honor God with his lips. But Christian knew him better, for he had lived in the same town with him, and he said: "His house is as empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savor; men that have had any dealings with him say that it is better to deal with a Turk than with him."

"You neglect the commandment of God and observe man-made precepts," Jesus declared. "Wise, is it," he continued, "to reject the commandment of God in order to keep your own traditions!" By "full well" he spoke ironically; it means, as Richard Baxter said, full ill. Then Jesus cited an instance that apparently was a common thing among the Jews. Moses bade a man honor his father and his mother, and declared that he who spoke evil of father and mother was worthy of death, he reminded them, but they said that if a man say to his father or mother that the money which should have helped them in their need was *corban,* literally, *a gift,* vowed to God, he may not do anything for his father or mother (you do not let him honor them, Mt. 15.6).

"*Corban,* which meant originally a sacrifice or a gift to God, was used in New Testament as a mere word of vowing, without implying that the thing vowed would actually be offered or given to God. Thus a man would say, 'Corban to me is wine for such a time,' meaning that he took a vow to abstain from wine. Or a man would say to a friend, 'Corban to me for such a time is whatsoever I might be profited by thee,' meaning that for such a time he vowed that he would receive neither hospitality nor any other benefit from his friend. Similarly, if a son said to his father or mother, 'Corban is whatsoever thou mightest have profited by me,' he took a vow not to assist his father or mother in any way, however much they might require it. A vow of this kind was held by the scribes to excuse a man from the duty of supporting his parents, and thus by their tradition they made void the word of God, verse 12" (One Volume Commentary).

"If you have brothers, sisters, a father, a mother, weigh earnestly what claim does lie upon you, on behalf of each, and consider it as the one thing needful, to pay them, more and more honestly and nobly, what you owe" (Carlyle).

"Thus you make of no effect the word of God by your traditions, which you hand down," declared Jesus; "and many similar things you do."

Two similar things done today Halford E. Luccock points out in his book entitled Fares, Please! He asserts that there are no ironies of history more striking than those of the followers of great movements who, through a mistaken loyalty to some of its temporary forms, make it stand for the very things against which it was originally launched in protest. "We see it in the case of great political parties, which began as associates of high-spirited innovators, becoming the bulwark of the selfish and reactionary interests of the political world. In another sphere we see it in some who would gladly transform, and through a sense of loyalty, too, so radical a movement as Methodism, which began as an uncompromising protest in the interest of spiritual freedom, a daring venturing forth into new fields, into a lifeless code of ironclad rules and unvarying customs."

III. WHEREIN REAL PURITY CONSISTS, verses 14-23. Jesus then called the multitude to him and taught them the difference between sin as the Pharisees defined it and as he knew it. "There is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile him," he said to them, "but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." When he had gone with his disciples into the house, they asked him to explain his word to the multitude. "Are ye so without understanding also?" Jesus asked, and then explained that real purity is purity of heart; if the heart is not cleansed, the cleansing of the hands is of no avail.

"A man cannot be polluted by eating that which is ceremonially unclean, but only by thinking and doing that which is morally impure. To men of

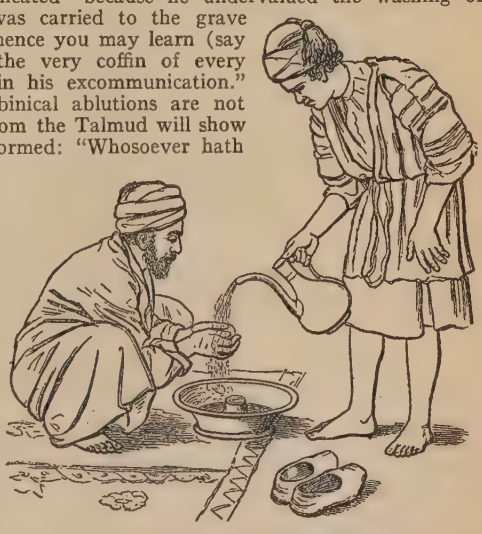
the present age such teaching may seem elementary. There is need, however, for its emphasis and for a new insistence upon reality in religion and upon distinguishing between what is formal and what is essential, between what is external and what is vital. To the Pharisees the teaching was revolutionary. It was a disclosure of their hypocrisy" (Charles R. Erdman).

Suppose you be, not merely seem.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Some of his disciples ate their bread with unwashen hands, verse 2. The penalty for this neglect to wash the hands was excommunication by the Sanhedrin. Rabbi Eleazar ben Hazar was excommunicated "because he undervalued the washing of hands," and dying unreconciled, was carried to the grave with a stone laid upon his bier, "whence you may learn (say they) that the Sanhedrin stones the very coffin of every excommunicated person that dies in his excommunication."

The intricate details of the rabbinical ablutions are not worth describing, but a quotation from the Talmud will show the spirit in which they were performed: "Whosoever hath his dwelling-place in the land of Israel, and eateth his common food in cleanness (i.e., with washed hands), and speaks the holy language (i.e., Hebrew), and recites his phylacteries morning and evening, let him be confident that he will obtain the life of the world to come." There was a special devil (Shibta) who was said to torment those who ate with unwashed hands—One Volume Commentary.



An Oriental Washing Hands

At the present time an orthodox Jew scrupulously observes this law, and should he accidentally touch his brow or his hair during the meal, he becomes ceremonially unclean, and must wash his hands again. At the entrance to the synagogues of the Jews there is always a place for washing the hands; the water is not considered "holy," but is there so that no one may have an excuse for entering and engaging in prayer with defiled hands. The Mohammedans observe this practise before praying, and when on the desert at the hour of prayer they wash their hands in the sand, and when they are where neither water nor sand is obtainable, they keep the law by going through the motions of washing.

Holding the tradition of the elders, verse 3. The Jews had two laws, their written law—the Pentateuch, and their unwritten law—the "tradition of the elders," which was handed down orally for many centuries. The "elders" were chiefly the scribes, though some of the regulations were attributed to Moses, Joshua, and the prophets. The tradition was finally committed to writing in the two Talmuds, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. The Talmud consists of the Mishna, the text, and the Gamara, the comments upon the text. The scribes sometimes held their tradition as of greater authority than the divine law. They had a saying that "the words of the scribes (the Mishna) are lovely, above the words of the law (the Pentateuch); for the words of the Law are (some of them) weighty and (some of them) light, while the words of the scribes are all weighty."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What was Jesus' attitude toward the law, as we saw in an earlier lesson? How did he meet the charge of the Pharisees that he ate with publicans and sinners? How did he meet their criticism that his disciples failed to keep the fasts?

The Attitude of Jesus toward Rabbinical Tradition

Jesus' attitude toward the law we saw in Lesson IV. Now we see his attitude toward the rabbinical traditions. He shows that the tradition of the elders as to ceremonial cleansing was not binding for two reasons: (1) it was the tradition of men, not the law of God; (2) it gave pretexts for evading the divine law. And then he explained that real purity is not of the hands but of the heart.

Between the Last Lesson and This

After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus sent his disciples by boat across the lake to Bethsaida while he escaped the crowd by ascending the mountain for prayer. The wind was contrary, and the boat was making little progress when Jesus joined the disciples, walking to them on the water. The scene in Gennesaret we studied seven weeks ago.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Godspeed to the teachers of childhood,
And lovers and leaders of Youth,
Who live in the spirit of Jesus,
And lift up His banner of Truth.

Who learn of the Teacher of teachers,
And serve in the school of His grace,
Unveiling His marvelous Gospel,
Revealing the light of His face.

God hallow their tasks and their talents,
And keep them as winsome as wise,
Till won by their love and their leading,
A new generation shall rise.—Arthur B. Patten.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS DENOUNCES FORMALISM

Beginning the Lesson

The Pharisees were indifferent to the defilement of the heart as long as they were careful in their external ablutions. "In modern phrasing they were the high ritualists of their time. To offend against the least of their ceremonial exactions was mortal sin, whilst they condoned sins that really mattered. They had woven a tissue of sophistry and falsehood."

Of what did the Pharisees accuse his disciples to Jesus? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

What Jesus Repudiated

That which he utterly repudiated in the worship of the time was the notion that ritual has an independent value apart from the character and the profit of the worshiper. Worship was supposed to be a tribute which gratified God and accumulated, in his hands, merits credited to the worshiper which would be awarded when the proper time came. So far had this gone that ritual was actually made use of to compound for the neglect of the most obvious moral duties, as in the case of the Corban, by which children relieved themselves from the duty of sustaining their parents through making a payment to the ecclesiastical treasury. Jesus accuses his contemporaries of thus making void the law by their traditions. "And many like things," he added, "ye do."

In all ages this has been the error of ecclesiastical life—the idea that worship is intended for the gratification of the Deity, instead of the benefit of the worshiper. The service, on the contrary, with which God is well pleased is the doing of his will; and this consists not in the performance of ritual but in the growth of character.—James Stalker, in The Ethics of Jesus.

Keeping the Sanctuary Undefiled

I was in St. Paul's in London a few years ago, when a poor fellow, over in one corner of the Cathedral, shot himself through the heart. The sacred edifice was so defiled by his blood spattered upon its wall, that it was presently reconsecrated with solemn rites. It is hard to understand how such a proceeding could be justified except upon the lowest and narrowest view of the sanctity of the place. There are worse things than the blood of a suicide upon the floor and walls of our sanctuaries. And if there must be reconsecration for every defilement, we must

needs be intoning our formulæ and swinging our censers all day long. No, this is not the way to keep the house clean. As well undertake to purify a leper by washing his sandals. No outward garnishing of nave and transept can commend to heaven a company of worshipers whose hands are unclean and whose hearts are impure.—David James Burrell, in For Christ's Crown.

Formalism in Worship

From the age of Constantine onward the Christian religion underwent a steady declension, becoming increasingly formal and mechanical, losing out of it the elements of spiritual power. In many parts of the Christian world the religion of Jesus degenerated into a form of words. Men and women still said their paternosters, but the spirit of the Lord had departed from their hearts.

To such depths Christianity descended in the ages which history calls dark. This tendency illustrated on a large scale in human history, is a tendency against which every Christian man must constantly contend. To all of us the temptation comes to reduce Christianity to a form of words. We will not renounce it, we will not forsake it, we will not leave it, and we will keep on repeating the dear and sacred words. How easy it is to repeat the Lord's Prayer, saying the words while the heart does not pray! How readily we repeat the Apostles' Creed, holding tightly to the form of sound words while the mind is wandering to the ends of the earth! How common it is to sing: "All hail the power of Jesus' name" with no answering thrill in the heart to the thought! Or "Nearer, my God, to Thee," without making the slightest effort to have the prayer fulfilled.

Christianity may also degenerate into a form of knowledge. It may be conceived as a philosophy, or poetry, or a science, a body of knowledge to be possessed, a group of doctrines to be accepted, a bundle of affirmations to be agreed to.

Gnosticism in the third century, and Hegelianism in our own time have conceived religion to be simply a form of knowledge, and many a man has imagined himself to be religious when he was simply interested in religious notions.

These are the two tendencies, then, against which every professing follower of the Lord must be on guard. The tendency to reduce Christianity to a form of words is the besetting temptation of Roman Catholicism.

In the Protestant church the tendency is to reduce Christianity to a form of knowledge. We Protestants boast ourselves of our intellectuality, we take delight in playing with ideas. We are experts in the formulation of high doctrines, we philosophize and speculate and compare our notions one with the other, and suppose that by working with ideas we become really faithful followers of the Lord. The average Roman Catholic feels that he is not a good Catholic unless he attends the mass. The average Protestant feels that he is not a good Protestant unless he accepts the creed.—Condensed from The New Crusade, by Charles E. Jefferson.

What Does God Want Me to Do?

Religion is not primarily a system of beliefs to be cherished—it utilizes beliefs, but they are altogether secondary. Religion is not a set of forms to be observed—it utilizes forms, but they, too, are secondary. Religion is not a tremendous emotional upheaval through which a man may pass on his way to glory—it may utilize this as a line of approach or as a point of departure, but such an experience is altogether incidental. Religion is a life to be lived seven days in the week in all those relationships which make up human existence.

"What does God want men to do?" we are sometimes asked in blunt fashion. The ready, conventional answer may be, "He wants them to go to church and be baptized. He wants them to take the sacraments regularly and to say their prayers and read their Bibles."

Well and good! Thou hast answered right! He does want me to do all those things provided always that it be kept clearly in mind that these things are means to an end and not means in themselves. If all these worshipful activities aid men in doing justly, in loving kindness and in walking humbly before God, then they are beautiful. If, however, they are put forward as substitutes for upright, useful and unselfish acts in the ordinary round of daily interest, then they are worse than useless—they are harmful in the eyes of him with whom we have to do.—Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Religion of a Layman.

Dishonoring Parents

Let me prayerfully heed this warning of my Lord. I dishonor my Father in heaven whenever I neglect my parents on earth. The two cannot be separated. What is done to the one is interpreted as done to the other.

We cannot atone for the neglect of our old mother by our feverishly busy life at the church. That would be giving a religious sanction to the breaking of God's commandment. To write an effusive paper for the Endeavor meeting when the old folk in the distant town are wondering when that long-forgotten letter is coming, is not well-pleasing to the Lord. It is possible there are some young Christians who are eager for some large service in the Kingdom, when all the time the immediate will of the Lord is that they should go home a little earlier at night!

Let me remember these things, and pay holy reverence to my Father in heaven by loving and dutiful respect to my parents on earth. A kindness done in the old home resounds in the courts of our God.—J. H. Jowett.

The Compassionate Youth

Oh, tell me not in your elderly way
That Youth is void of soul today!
I have watched too much
His compassionate touch
To listen to what you say.
I have seen Christ stand
With beneficent hand
When Youth chose the heroic and true;
I have seen him smile when Youth paid the price
Of magnificent sacrifice
For the sake of paying an old debt due
To parents who gave when their means were few.—Madeleine Sweeny Miller.

The Peril of Secondhand Religion

Consider with me for a moment how simple Christianity was when it began. It was just a group of men keeping fellowship with Jesus and learning how to live. That was all. They had no creeds to recite when they met together; what they believed was still an unstereotyped passion in their hearts. They had no sacraments organizationally enforced to symbolize their faith. They even had no organization; they never dreamed that the Christian gospel was to build a church outside the synagogue. That was Christianity in the beginning; a group of people keeping fellowship with Jesus and learning how to live.

Then the Master went away and the tremendous forces of human life and history laid hold on that little movement which so vitally he had begun. They began building churches. They had to build them; they could not help it. Just as the Wesleyans had to leave the Anglican Church, not because they wanted to, but because the Anglicans wouldn't keep them, so the Christians had to leave the synagogue, not because they planned to, but because the synagogue was not big enough to hold them. And they began building creeds. They had to. Every one of those first Christian creeds was written in sheer self-defense. And then they drew up rituals. They had to. We have ritual everywhere. We have it in law. We have it in business, as you will discover if you try to display conspicuous originality in making out a check. We cannot keep any spiritual thing in human life, even the spirit of courtesy, as a disembodied spirit. We ritualize it. We bow, we take off our hats, we shake hands, we rise when a lady enters—we have a thousand ways of expressing politeness in a ritual. Neither could the church keep so deep and beautiful a thing as the Christian life without symbolic expression.

So historic Christianity grew as we have seen it, vast and complicated, organized, creedalized, ritualized. And ever as it grew, the peril of secondhand religion grew with it, for there were multitudes of people who joined these organizations, recited these creeds, observed these rituals, took all the secondary and derived elements of Christianity, but that one vital thing which all of this was meant in the first place to express—that was often forgotten—keeping fellowship with Jesus and learning how to live.

We cannot say it to ourselves too often that Christianity is a personal experience. One evening in a West Point delegation at the Northfield Student Conference, conversation fell on serious lines and one of the men threw this question into the circle: "What is Christianity, anyway?" After a long pause one of the cadets gave this answer: "Oscar Westover." Exactly! I do not know who he was. May God have kept him through these terrific years that have befallen since. Only, he was one of the cadets living a kind of life so that when the boys thought of Christianity they defined it in terms of him. That is the only way you ever can define it. It is "Oscar Westover." It is not a creed, nor an organization, nor a ritual. These

are important, but they are secondary. They are the leaves; they are not the roots. They are the wires; they are not the message. The thing itself is life; it is "Oscar Westover."—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The danger of formalism. "You cannot magnify the little external things of religion without thereby minimizing the great and vital things."

2. Gladstone on his eighty-seventh birthday wrote: "Lady G—— gave me today a delightful present of a small crucifix. I am rather too independent of symbol." What was in his mind? What may be said for and against symbol, ritual, religious customs?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

SINCERITY IN RELIGION

Beginning the Lesson

"Clean face, clean hands, clean heart"—you all know the motto. In some of our mission schools in China the small boys who try to live up to this motto call themselves "The Young People's Clean Society." There was a "Clean Society" in Galilee in the time of Christ, but their motto included only one thing—clean hands. What did they say one day to Jesus? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Two Kinds of Clean Hands

There is a story told of a little boy who was observed to do what is rather an astonishing thing for almost any boy to do of his own accord, that is, to go and wash his hands many times a day. He would do it five or six times in the morning and three or four times in the afternoon, and in between while besides—whenever he saw a speck of dirt upon his hands. But friends noticed that he was not nearly so particular about his face. So at last his elder brother asked him what made him wash his hands so often. And this was his answer, "Because I wish to be strong."

"What do you mean?" said his brother. "Do you think that washing your hands will make you strong?"

"Yes," said the little fellow; "I am sure of it. I read it in the Bible."

"Where?" asked the other.

So the little man went and fetched his Bible, and found the Book of Job; then he found the seventeenth chapter, and, putting his finger on the ninth verse, he said, "There you see it says, 'He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger,' and that is why I wash my hands."

His brother could not help smiling at the innocent mistake, and then he preached a little sermon. He said that was a bit of Bible picture-talk, a sort of tiny parable; and he told him that there were two kinds of dirt in the world—one that you could see and another, a worse kind, that you could not. The sort that you could see was made up of such things as mud and ink, and soot and dust; while the other sort was made up of cruelty, dishonesty, idleness, mischief, and the rest. And then, he showed how the Bible puts the dirt which we can see just as a picture of these wrongs, bad things that stain the soul; and he said that it was not washing the hands with soap and water—though that ought to be done at proper times—which really made them clean, but keeping them away from bad, cruel, mischievous things, and using them in useful work and kindly deeds, that made them look clean and beautiful in the sight of God.—George Critchley, in The Legend of the Silver Cup.

Blossom and Tinsel

In the store window at holiday time there is an evergreen tree covered with shining bits of tin, colored paper, sparkling dust on snowy cotton, candles and other decorations. Over it the electric lights play, drawing the eyes of the people who pass along the street. Grown folk as well as children admire the tree and praise its sparkling finery.

A week later you may be passing along the alley behind the store. There on the ash heap lies the magnificent tree of the show window, but how bedraggled and desolate it is now! The candles are burned out; the wax smears the foliage; the tinsel is spoiled; the cotton with its sparkling dust is covered with ashes and dirt. Its day of glory has passed swiftly; it is now counted as worthless, and its beauty, a thing of the past, is forgotten.

A few months later an apple tree comes into bloom. The buds open, and beautiful

blossoms cover the branches. You bury your face in the sweet flowers and think of the days ahead when you will be returning to the tree.

Weeks pass. The blossoms have faded and fallen to the ground, but the tree lives, and instead of the flowers, little apples cover the tree. For months they grow and ripen until at last from every branch the rosy cheeked fruit invites you to come and be refreshed.

What a difference between the two trees! One was taken out of its place in life and made to appear what it was not. It showed a beauty that was not its own. It was covered with a finery that was all "put on," and when the occasion for which it had been prepared had passed the tree was forgotten and thrown out as worthless.

The other tree remained what God made it to be. Its beauty was not put on from without, but grew from within. Its value was not just for a day, but the passing of the beauty of spring brought the wealth of a full fruitage in the fall. Honor followed praise, for the riches of its harvest were better than the beauty of its bloom.

The Scriptures many times compare men with trees. In such a comparison which sort of tree would you be? Are you living a life that is artificial, or are you being your own best self? Are you making an appearance that is all "put on," or do others know you to be what you seem? Are the things that your friends praise you for your own, or another's that you have borrowed for the occasion? When your short day is done will you be forgotten, or will you leave the world richer than it was? Will the distance of the separating years lend enchantment to the vision that the world has kept of one who lived not for praise but for the harvest time of a useful life?—The Youth's companion.

The Religion of Jesus

The Religion of Jesus is not a matter of services and hymns and public prayers; it is rather a matter of shops and houses, of offices and workrooms, of laboratories and consulting rooms, of law courts and exchanges, of hospital wards and schoolrooms! The religion of Jesus has primarily to do not with churches and ordinances and sacraments and conferences: it has rather to do with things like pens and typewriters, ledgers and cash registers, tools and engines, brooms and kitchens, discounts and balances. These are the things that the religion of Jesus has to do with, and it is your business and mine in life to make all these things instruments of righteousness.—J. Stuart Holden.

The Gift

Sometimes I shut the door on all the world
And go alone to that most secret place
Where there is only God.
Just God and I! Then
Together we go over subtle acts,
Mistakes and small hypocrisies of mine.
I strip myself from shams and shackles free
And stand aghast at my duplicity.

We look, just God and I, into my heart.
And though I shrink, we gaze there to the depth.
And though I tremble, cowed by what we find,
I suffer, too, a kind of poignant joy
That I can doff that heavy coat, Pretense,
As one relieved who slips from outer shell
That burdens though it wraps becoming well.

And while I find it often hard to bear,
The burning of God's knowing eyes on me,
I feel me stronger grow just from their gaze;
And my nakedness, it seems to me, is clothed
In raiment new that is most wondrous fair.
When next I venture forth, Sincerity
Is the gift that God in secret gave to me.—Lessie Stringfellow Read.

Sentence Sermons

From within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed . . . and defile the man.—Jesus.

Life means—learning to abhor the false and love the true.—Browning.

REVIEW: JESUS PROCLAIMS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

GOLDEN TEXT: And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. Matthew 9.35

DEVOTIONAL READING Malachi 3.1-6

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation and let all pupils who recognize the allusion signify this. Then ask one of them to tell the lesson to which it refers or ask the other pupils questions in regard to it.

I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided.—Lincoln.

I am confident that should every foreigner be forced to withdraw, the grain of mustard seed will grow. Churches that live will have such vitality that the good news will be spread.—A Chinese Missionary.

One touch upon his garment's fringe
Still heals the hurt of bitter years;
Before him yet the demons cringe,
He gives the wine of joy for tears.—Margaret Sangster.

This characterization comes perilously near to being akin to the sin of the scribes of old when they attributed that which was good to the action of the spirit of evil. A more careful analysis of the social aspirations now becoming vocal in all lands would indicate that a strong man has entered the house and that he is destined to bind the forces of evil which have been working injury to the weak.—Charles Reynolds Brown.

"Whatever the fever, his touch can heal it."

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.—Whittier.

If you find that one door is blocked, try another; and if no ordinary way is open, tear up the roof, make a new departure. Love is inventive, and enthusiasm is persistent.—Samuel Chadwick.

The new wine of liberty is fermenting in the ancient bottles of custom and tradition.—A Russian writer.

Be not afraid. There is no harm
Can come to those who trust
The God who rules both wind and wave,
Whose laws are kind and just.—Pearl Holloway.

Our own sorry soul is made up of the accumulated attitudes, preferences, antipathies, loves, fears, hatreds, forgivenesses, which we take up and exercise towards our fellows. . . . In view of all that, let us take deeply into our thoughts and practise the message of these words, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"—John A. Hutton.

With his new cloth the ancient fabric of Hebraism was torn asunder; he poured his new wine into as many new bottles as could be found, and still the bottles burst.—Mary Austin.

In the enlargement and enrichment of personality, with its ever-widening capacity for service, I find something more amazing than anything in the story of the loaves and fishes.—Charles R. Brown.

Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice,
Where love its arms have opened wide,
Or man for man has calmly died,
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head.—Whittier.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults

1. What was Jesus' attitude toward suffering? 2. What was Jesus' attitude toward sin? 3. What questions has Jesus answered, and how do his answers show his wisdom? 4. How has Jesus shown himself the master of controversies? 5. What incidents reveal his breadth of sympathy as well as his absolute sense of authority? 6. What incidents have we seen that show his ability to read men's thoughts? 7. What did Jesus teach about the Kingdom of God? 8. What higher law than that of Judaism did Jesus declare, and in what words? 9. How did he denounce formalism? 10. How were The Twelve trained?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. What is the first story told about Jesus in the Book of Mark? 2. Where did Jesus spend the first thirty years of his life? 3. What city in Galilee was his headquarters during his public ministry? 4. Why did Pharisees find fault with Jesus? 5. How did friends of Jesus oppose his work? 6. Why did the people follow Jesus in crowds? 7. What lives were touched by Jesus in these lessons? 8. What mighty works of Jesus have we studied? 9. Tell two parables of Jesus. 10. How did Jesus set his disciples to work?

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Prepare a set of twelve cards each dealing with a different lesson of the Quarter. Upon each card write two or three questions about the topic for that lesson. Give the second card to a pupil to think about while the questions upon the first card are being answered by the rest of the class; the third to another pupil while the second is being considered, etc.

2. Mark off twelve squares upon your board, and in each write some word or draw some sketch which will at once recall the lesson. From these as starting points, recall the chief events of the lessons.

3. Bring a supply of paper and pencils to class, and let pupils spend the period in writing answers to questions which you have prepared beforehand as especially adapted to your class. On the following Sunday commend good work and correct any false impressions which answers may have shown.

4. Ask pupils to complete these words of Jesus and tell the occasion that led him to utter each:

1. A prophet is not without . . . 2. And if a kingdom be divided . . . 3. And if a house be divided . . . 4. They that are whole have . . . 5. No man seweth a piece . . . 6. Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to . . . 7. So is the Kingdom of God as if a man should . . . 8. It is like a grain of mustard seed . . . 9. Go to thy house unto thy friends and tell . . . 10. For Moses said, Honor . . .

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. The Ministry of Jesus to the Sick.
2. The Ministry of Jesus to the Sinful.
3. The Popularity of Jesus.
4. The Opposition to Jesus.
5. Jesus as a Controversialist.
6. Jesus as a Personal Worker.
7. The Parable about the Silent and Gradual Processes of Nature and its Application.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. How Jesus Began his Work.
2. The Friends and the Enemies of Jesus.
3. A Wonderful Feast.
4. The Story of the Healing of a Paralytic.
5. A Parable about the Tiniest Seed and its Possibilities.
6. The Experiences of the Disciples in the School of Christ.
7. An Account of the Story You Like Best.

MOUNT HERMON

SECOND QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD: STUDIES IN MARK

(Second Half of a Six-Months' Course)

Lesson I—April 1

JESUS THE SUFFERING MESSIAH

GOLDEN TEXT: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Mark 8:34

LESSON Mark 8.27-9.1; 9.30-32; 10.32-34

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 63.7-9

MARK 8.27 And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am? 28 And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. 29 And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. 34 And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. 36 For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? 37 For what should a man give in exchange for his life?

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GREAT QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER, verse 27-30. The people, influenced by the Pharisees, were now beginning to desert Jesus. With his disciples he went northward into the region of Cæsarea Philippi. On the way he asked the disciples who men thought him to be. Some thought him John the Baptist; others, Elijah; yet others, one of the prophets, they told him.

When E. Stanley Jones asked a leading man in India what he thought of Jesus, this was the answer he received: "Mr. Jones, there is nobody else who

is seriously bidding for the heart of the world except Jesus Christ. There is nobody else on the field."

"But who say ye that I am?" Jesus then questioned. With this question the climax of his training of the disciples was reached. By it he voiced the aim of all his teaching; and in Peter's answer, "Thou art the Christ," he had the assurance that his goal had been attained. "No general ever knew more clearly what he meant to accomplish by a season's campaign," declares the author of The Fighting Saint, "than did Jesus in the short time of his ministry. He had a definite plan, which possibly his disciples did not know until after his ascension, but which is as plain as a carved statue when we look at his life with the object of finding it out. Jesus had steadily educated these men up to this point by a process of instruction that makes the modern student of pedagogy wonder at its perfection. See how he did it. First he called them, attracted them, won their confidence and willingness. Then he put before them an idea—The Sermon on the Mount. This he followed up with the demonstration of his own life and power. Next he sent them out to preach, to try it for themselves—the principles of learning by doing. Last of all he called them aside and said, 'Now, who am I?' and they knew him." "Their accurate insight did not depend upon an argument, it rested upon an experience."

He who will come to Jesus as Peter came to him, not knowing him to be all that he is but believing in him enough to trust him and to follow him, to be his pupil, day by day learning from him, seeing his gracious deeds and hearing his winning words, will have the conviction forced upon him eventually as it was upon Peter, that Jesus is none other than the Christ, the Son of the living God. To be much with Christ will end in knowing Christ.

The word *Christ* is the translation of the Greek word which means *The Anointed*. *Messiah* is the translation of the Hebrew word which has the same meaning. Hebrew kings were anointed with oil when given their office, and the promised spiritual King was thought of as The Anointed, the chosen one of God, until "The Anointed," the Christ, became the name by which he was designated.

Jesus charged the disciples not to tell any one who he was. It could only make trouble if told to the multitude.

"These men, Peter chief among them, lived themselves into this doctrine. This royal doctrine, this transcendent insight, came to men who were living in the royal way, keeping daily step with the best they knew. God has no disclosures to others. He is silent to them. For those who stand aloof, Jesus is Elijah or the Baptist or one of the prophets. These are spoken of as 'they' or 'some.' Their opinions have that kind of value. The others join in the clear adoring confession. Life with Jesus gets the vision of the truth about Jesus" (William Fraser McDowell).

II. THE DEMANDS OF MESSIAHSHIP, verses 31-33. The disciples were eager to have Jesus proclaimed King, as we know from further events. It was therefore necessary now to tell them what Messiahship meant. Before this, Jesus had spoken in veiled words of what he must suffer (Mt. 9.15; 12.40; Jn. 2.18-22; 3.14; 6.51); now he spoke in the plainest words of the certainty of the cross. He must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and chief priests, be killed, and after three days rise again. Calmly he had accepted all this as the will of his Father, and calmly he now told his disciples of it. "The Evangelists, indeed, write it down in plain language as fully taught them by later experience, that he was to be rejected by the rulers of Israel, slain, and to rise again the third day. And there can be as little doubt that Christ's language (as afterwards they looked back upon it) must have clearly implied all this, as that at the time they did not fully understand it. Otherwise, they could not afterwards have been in such doubt about his death and resurrection. He was so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking that about the 'leaven' in a literal, which he had meant in a figurative sense, that it was but natural that they should have regarded in the same light announcements which, in their strict literality, would seem to them well-nigh incredible. They could well understand his rejection by the scribes as a sort of figurative death, or violent suppression of his claims and doctrines, and then, after briefest period, their resurrection, as it were, but not these terrible details in their full literalness" (Alfred Edersheim).

Peter took Jesus to task; usurping the Teacher's place, he rebuked him. "Be it

far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee," were his words which Matthew records. Peter could not grasp the meaning of so direful a prediction. He had associated the Messiahship with power, but not with sacrifice. Why this talk of defeat, when the Messiah could not be defeated? he thought. Jesus must have become suddenly depressed; he, Peter, would drive depression away.

Jesus turned, and, noticing the effect of Peter's words upon the other disciples, swiftly exclaimed, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter was playing the tempter's part, offering Jesus the old temptation which he had met in the wilderness after his baptism. "Thou mindest not the things of God (thou dost not think God's thoughts), but the things of men." The sharpness of the rebuke shows the intensity of Jesus' emotion.

A temptation put in one's way by a friend is a greater stumbling block than one laid by others.

III. THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP, verses 34-37. One great truth, Jesus is the Messiah, the disciples had learned; another great truth, the Messiah must suffer, they had been told, but, as after-events proved, they had not grasped; a third great truth they were now told—the followers of the Messiah must suffer and sacrifice likewise.

To the multitudes as well as to the disciples Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Denying oneself does not mean the giving up of this or that, but the giving up of self, the repudiating of all self-centered claims, the yielding of one's will to Christ's will. Not only must his Master endure the cross, but he himself, Peter learned, if he would be Christ's true follower, must be ready to suffer death, too. "A Christian is a Crucial," is Luther's comment.

"The beautiful thing is that this appeal of Christ was not futile. Instead of repelling men it drew them. He actually obtained the men whom he was hunting for, not by offering them worldly inducements, not by making such appeals as anybody but Christ would have made, but by addressing the sacrificial spirit in them, and making an appeal to their latent capacity for heroism. There is a wonderful tribute in Jesus' method to those characteristics in human nature which have never been destroyed, which can answer to the highest motives, which do not need to be bought by any low compensations, but which spring into full life when appealed to on the most heroic and unselfish plane. We know how, in consequence, this exultation in difficulties, this love of hardship, this scorn of ease, became the characteristic note of early Christianity. In the best summary description which Paul gives of Christian character and manhood, in the twelfth chapter of Romans, we find him speaking of 'rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation.' And when he comes to write his conception of the character of the happy warrior, we find him setting this in the foreground, 'Endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'" (Robert E. Speer).

"For whosoever would have his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it," Jesus continued. The word *life* and the pronoun *it* referring to *life,* are used in a twofold sense here. The sentence means: He whose only care is to save his natural life shall lose his spiritual life; and he who is willing to lose his natural life for my sake shall find his spiritual life.

Jesus would have us give up the lesser good for the greater. The giving up of self, the losing of life, is for the sake of gaining him, the finding of the highest life. To live for self is to die; to die to self is to live. What one gives up is of small moment compared with what one gains. It has been well said of the statue of Moses by Michael Angelo that when the sculptor had finished it, it was, in a sense, only a fragment of the block out of which he had hewn it, yet with the visible wastage there was a spiritual inflow, and the statue ended by being immeasurably greater than the block. And so it is true that the character and life we gain under God's shaping hand are immeasurably greater than all we lose in the process.

"For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life?" questioned Jesus. "The contrast is not between gaining this world and losing the next; not exactly between acquiring material and sacrificing spiritual interest; but between gaining that which is eternal to oneself and losing one's own character and life in the process. Luke gives it more

clearly: 'For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away?'" (Lyman Abbott).

It is a memorable picture which appeared in Punch during the war, the one entitled Unconquerable. The Kaiser and the King of Belgium stood together on desolated soil. The Kaiser, leaning comfortably on his sword, is saying to the King of Belgium, "So you see—you've lost everything." The King of Belgium in a noble attitude with head erect replies, "Not my soul."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Let him take up the cross and follow me, verse 34. So accustomed are we to the use of this term, the cross, that the originality and the pathos of it in the mouth of Jesus may escape notice. As far as I am aware, it originated with him; and it is interesting to consider out of what experience it arose. It is quite possible that, when very young, he may have witnessed the act of crucifixion, this punishment being common in Palestine. He may, as a boy, have followed the noisy crowd and watched the miserable victims on the way to execution. His sensitive soul would take in the horror of this most ghastly of all punishments; but one trait of cruelty and scorn appears especially to have stung his imagination. This was the fact that from the place of detention to the place of execution the condemned man had, amid the laughter and jeers of the multitude, to carry on his own back the apparatus of his doom—an indignity which, as far as I remember, is without a parallel. This burned in the memory of Jesus; and when he required a name for all that can be imagined of shame and suffering he said, "Let him take up his cross and follow me."—James Stalker, in The Ethic of Jesus.

This is the first mention of the cross in Luke and Mark. Its associations were such that this declaration must have been startling. The Jews, especially in Galilee, knew well what the cross meant. Hundreds of the followers of Judas and Simon had been crucified. It represents, therefore, not so much a burden as an instrument of death, and it was mentioned because of its familiar associations.—Alfred Plummer.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

At his baptism, what did Jesus hear a voice declaring him to be? What did John the Baptist say Jesus was? What did the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue call Jesus? What question did the disciples ask each other about Jesus after the storm on the lake? In what words in an earlier lesson did we hear Jesus refer to his death?

Between the Last Lesson and This

After the events of our last lesson it seemed best for Jesus to go into temporary exile with his disciples, for the Pharisees were bitterly hostile and many of the people were deserting him. They went northward into the region of Tyre and Sidon, where Jesus cured the Syrophœnician's daughter, Mark 7.24-30. On his return through the Decapolis he wrought many miracles of healing, Mark 7.31-37. In the early part of chapter eight, Mark records the feeding of the four thousand, the demand of Pharisees and Sadducees for a sign, and the restoring of sight to the blind man near Bethsaida.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Cæsarea Philippi is about thirty miles northeast of Capernaum. Herod the Great built a white marble temple at Paneas, as the Greeks called the place, and his son Philip the Tetrarch enlarged the town and changed its name to Cæsarea. In honor of Philip, and also to distinguish it from Cæsarea on the coast, Philippi was added. It was magnificently situated, more than eleven hundred feet above sea level, at the foot of beautiful Mount Hermon, which towers above it for more than eight thousand feet. The lower slopes of the mountain are covered with vineyards, but the three peaks are white with snow even in early summer. The abundant water here produces luxuriant vegetation.

Study this map of Palestine, which locates the cities of Galilee and Syria visited by Jesus in his public ministry. How small a world it was!

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Simon did more than discover Christ. He fearlessly avowed his faith in what he had inwardly felt. Now, it is one thing to suspect a truth within, and even to be certain of it; it is another to commit one's self openly to it. Simon had come near to the conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Perhaps he had not wholly settled down upon it until the very moment. It was Jesus, and not Simon, who declared that the view to which Simon now committed himself was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Simon was not aware of having reached this opinion in any unusual way. He just felt it, and, with or without any hesitancy or timidity, he burst out with it. How much this must have meant to Simon, similar experiences in our lives have taught us. Perhaps we can remember the very occasion when we sat debating the question of Christ in our own minds. "Is he the Son of God or not? What is he?" we were asking ourselves. And, as we thought, we found that more than just mere opinion was involved. Mind and heart and will were fused in common striving after truth, and then in a moment we rose up and confessed him. We had been seeing dimly, but with enlarging clearness. But the act sealed the vision. The leap of faith in utterance confirms the vision of faith in the soul.—Robert E. Speer, in Seeking the Mind of Christ.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS INTERPRETS HIS MESSIAHSHIP

Beginning the Lesson

What the Pharisees thought of Jesus we know. Their hatred of him was intense, and they were already plotting his death. In their last plotting they said, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." Their jealousy of Jesus would not let them see him with unclouded eyes. What the people thought of Jesus we know, too. They had followed him for the loaves and the fishes: they could not grasp him and they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I am come down from heaven?" But what did the disciples think of him? Has the time come when they have grasped the great truth of his divinity, the truth on which the growth of the Kingdom depends? Have the months of living and working with him dispelled their preconceived notions of what the Messiah's career would be? He had been sowing the seed in the good soil of their minds, and now the time was ripe for him to gather the first fruits of the harvest; would it yield thirty or sixty or a hundred-fold? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Our Lord and Savior

In the early days of the Church, the Creed, the expression of belief, was of the simplest possible kind: "I believe in Jesus as the Son of God." Then men began to ask, "What does this mean? How can he be the Son of God? Is he Son of God in any different sense from that in which we may be sons of God?" It became necessary to answer these questions in view of certain false conceptions of Christ which became current. There arose those who denied that Jesus was the Son of God in any sense that was not true also of every man. There arose also those who denied that Jesus was in any sense a true man. They said his manhood was a merely phantasmal thing, something adopted for the time being, and that the essence of his nature was divine. There arose also those who insisted that Jesus Christ was only one of many revelations of the Godhead, that he was but one link in a great chain of angels, archangels, emanations, and ministers, sent of God to link up this earth with heaven. And so it became necessary for the representatives of the Christian Church to set down in plain speech what they meant by ascribing divine honor and sonship to this Jesus of Nazareth; and thereupon began the long, painful, and intricate process by which the creeds of Christendom grew up.

But we have come to realize more generally that in Jesus Christ, and in the Scripture statements concerning Jesus Christ, there are truths adumbrated which are not

to be put into words. No words that the human mind can invent are sufficient to express the full meaning of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and we now understand that not even the development of religious thought has yet come to an end. We cannot believe that the fullest possible expression of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus was reached in the fourth century or in the fifth century, or will be reached in this twentieth century to which we belong. The work of Christ is final, but our conception of it grows.

As Dr. Denney has recently shown, it might be possible and is surely desirable to reduce all the creeds of Christendom to this very simple form: "I believe in God through Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord and Savior." That is all that is really needed; for it should be remembered that belief in Jesus Christ is not the acceptance of intellectual propositions concerning Jesus Christ. Belief in Jesus Christ is the acceptance in actual fact and experience of Jesus Christ on his own terms. The man who really believes is the man who in his own heart says to Jesus Christ, "My Lord and Savior," who acts upon that principle, who makes Christ his Leader and his Lord, who lives in and unto him, who seeks his ends and pursues his will.—W. B. Selbie, in Aspects of Christ.

What Will Ye Do with Christ?

Is it possible to give a simple description of the Christian attitude toward Christ, meaning that attitude which constitutes a person a real disciple of Christ, irrespective of any acceptance or rejection of formal creed? Would it be possible to select at haphazard a group of Christian men and women, and ask them the ancient question, "What think ye of Christ?" and get answers which would have in them, either expressed or implied, a fundamental identity of content?

With these questions Dr. Edwin Lewis begins his thought-compelling book, Jesus Christ and the Human Quest. Suppose, he continues, that such a group were composed of Paul and James, Athanasius and Arius, Augustine and Pelagius, Luther and Socinius, Thomas à Kempis and Calvin, Wesley and Toplady, Newman and Charles Kingsley, Edwards and Channing, Theresa and Mrs. Booth, Harnack and Loisy, and we were to put to them the question, "What think ye of Christ?" would the diverse answers—and how diverse they would be hardly needs to be said!—yield what could in any fair way be called a common element? And would one common element be precisely what Christ himself, judging from the Gospels, would regard as primary, and would the wide range of differences be what we have every reason for believing he would regard as only of secondary importance?

Dr. Lewis then gives the two meanings which the question may have. Does it intend to test the theology or to test the devotion and faith? Does it mean, What do you believe concerning the ultimate constitution of the person of Christ, and concerning his metaphysical relation to God, the moral law, the world, and the human race? Or does it mean, What place do you seek to give Christ in your own life and what place do you believe he ought to have in the life of the world? If we ask our representative group the question in what might be called its theological aspect, we should be confronted with a collection of answers that would be simply chaotic. When we turn to our question in its "practical" aspect, there is not a man of our representative group but would answer, "The place of complete moral and spiritual leadership."

"'What think ye of Christ?' Let the question be taken to mean, 'What will ye do with Christ?' A man is truly 'saved' in precisely the degree in which the Christ-spirit is regnant in him, and the spread of the Kingdom of God in the world is identical with the spread of that spirit. Men will assign different reasons for yielding to that spirit. How many 'theories of life' and 'philosophies of loyalty' could one have found among the volunteers on the battlefields of France? Yet all manifested themselves in a like devotion. Many are the reasons why men crown Christ as their Lord: what matters, so he be crowned?"

Reasoning Which Influenced a Skeptic

Dr. Norwood, while an army chaplain with the Australian troops during the war, had a long conversation with a man in Belgium who at one time had decided to enter the ministry, but the war upset his faith. "As an honorable man," he said, "I cannot become a Christian minister, for I do not believe the things I used to believe." "Do you believe in Jesus?" asked Dr. Norwood. "Yes," was the reply, "but only as a Man. His words help me like those of Emerson, and Carlyle, and Shakespeare."

"Does Jesus ever make you feel ashamed of yourself, and arouse in you a desire to become a better man?" asked Dr. Norwood.

"That is true enough," replied the man.

"Do you feel like that when you commune with Emerson and Carlyle and Shakespeare?"

"Well, perhaps you are right there," said the man. "I don't."

"And do you ever feel like falling down on your knees and praying to be delivered from sin, after reading Shakespeare and the others?"

"No," replied the man. "They help me in other ways."

"Were you ever subjected to a terrific test when your whole character was at stake?"

"Yes," said the man, and he admitted that it was the thought of Jesus Christ that saved him from sin.

"Did not Emerson or Carlyle or Shakespeare come to your mind with saving grace?" asked Dr. Norwood, and the man admitted that they did not enter his mind in the great crisis of life.

The other day Dr. Norwood had a letter from Australia telling him of a fine young Australian minister whose name he recognized as that of this skeptic he once met in Belgium.

The Song of a Heathen (Sojourning in Galilee, A. D. 32).

If Jesus Christ is a man,—
And only a man,—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God,—
And the only God,—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, the air!

—Richard Watson Gilder.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. See Chapter IX of The Life That Really Is, by Lyman Abbott; Chapter XII of The Master's Questions to His Disciples, by G. H. Knight; the Deity of Christ, by Robert E. Speer; The Character of Jesus, by Horace Bushnell; My Idea of God, in Woman's Home Companion for May, 1926; Chapter entitled The Character of Jesus Forbids His Possible Classification with Men, in Horace Bushnell's book, Nature and the Supernatural.

2. No man who knows Christ may escape a decision regarding him.—George Adam Smith.

3. Peter's claim to greatness. See pp. 174-180 of Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.—Browning.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do you think of the reasonableness of the Resurrection? 2. Of the scriptural proof of the Resurrection. 3. What bearing upon the Resurrection has the power of the early Church as recorded in The Acts? 4. What proof of the Resurrection in the divine power experienced today? 5. What has the faith in human immortality gained from the Resurrection? 6. What is Paul's argument about the Resurrection in 1 Cor. 15.12-19?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE COST OF BEING LOYAL TO CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

Are ye acquaint wi' Jesus?
None can tell the happiness
There is wi' ken'in' him,
Wi' love tae rich and puir folk a'
His hert's fou tae the brim.

These are the words which Lord Rosebery wrote in his Bible. Were you asked if you were acquainted with some one whom you had met once or twice, would you say yes? Would you be acquainted with him in the sense in which Lord Rosebery used the word? When did Peter first become acquainted with Jesus? Did he then know him well? What was it necessary for Peter to do before he really knew Jesus? We have seen how Peter lived with Jesus and learned to know him, and how he saw how full was Jesus' heart with love for rich and poor folks all.

Now Jesus wishes to know whether after so many months in his school—for Peter was a disciple, you know, and that means a pupil, a learner—whether he and the other disciples have really learned who their Great Teacher is. They have gone to the farthest northern city in Palestine—what was its name?—and he asks two questions of him. What is the first one? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Be Loyal to Christ

Long years ago a man of noble birth and great wealth went into one of the splendid picture galleries of Europe, and walking through the rooms he found himself brought to a standstill in front of one picture. It was a picture of the Son of God, suffering on earth. Of course no picture could be a portrait of that face in which the glory of God is shining; but it was enough to suggest all that Christ is, all that Christ has done. And under the picture were these words: "This have I done for thee; what hast thou done for me?"

Oh! you young lives, look upon that face that shines out of the pages of this gospel of the love of God, the face of him who gave himself for you. And as you look ask your own heart: What have I done for him? Many of you have already made a beginning in the service of the Son of God. Touched by his love you have already taken him openly as your Savior. And today I would have you ask yourself: Can I not show this Son of God much more clearly than I do, how deeply and tenderly I value him, and his work for me, and his love for me?—Condensed from The Silver Cup, by C. C. Hall.

Why Must the Follower of Christ Deny Himself?

"Aunt Nan," said Beth in a tone of perplexity, "I've been reading that text in the New Testament: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' It seems so hard, some way, and stern. Why should you always be denying yourself? You've been born with your Self, and its wants and wishes. Why should you have to deny them?"

"That used to puzzle me, too," answered Aunt Nan, sympathetically. "In fact, I never did quite see until I ran upon a little phrase in one of Whittier's poems:

'When duty leaves to love its task,
The beggar Self forgets to ask.'

The 'beggar Self,' you notice. Not the wicked, or even the foolish; but just the beggar, always asking, asking with outstretched hand. Nowadays we are taught to 'deny' beggars on principle—to refuse their small pleas for the moment's relief, and instead hand over their cases to some sane and wiser agency.

"Why? Not for our own comfort surely. Many times it would be much easier to open our purses, hand out a few pennies, and go on with a glow of self-satisfaction over our charity. But the truth is that the beggar on the street doesn't really know what he needs, and consequently is not asking to have his highest need satisfied. The wiser hands in which we put him may give him just the little lift that he asked for, but they are almost certain to give him a great deal more as well.

"It is just the same way, I fancy, with our 'beggar Selves.' They don't know what they really need; they know what they want at the moment—the little, petty, selfish thing that their surface appetites call for. So following the same wise line of conduct and real charity, we deny the desire of the moment merely to give the higher, completer gift—by handing over our Selves to the higher, wiser guidance that knows and cares for even the 'beggars' and can satisfy their true needs."

"And they probably hate it at first, just as the other beggars do," said Beth with her appreciative smile; "but at any rate I begin to see the sense of it, even if my beggar Self doesn't."—The Youth's Companion.

A Valiant Cross-Bearer

A young girl employed in teaching in Ohio, felt that it was her duty to take up foreign missionary work. She placed herself in the hands of a missionary board,

who sent her to Cawnpore, in India. After six years' service there her health suddenly and unaccountably failed. She was compelled to return home. The physicians whom she consulted were baffled by her disease, which was unknown to them. One day it occurred to her that the symptoms were those she had perceived in leprous patients in India. She isolated herself from her family, but without telling them her terrible suspicion. When almost convinced that she was right, she took two of the members of the Board of Missions into her confidence. They advised her to consult specialists. She did so: and they told her that she was a leper, and held out no hope of cure. Still keeping her secret, still turning a cheerful face to her friends, she announced her intention of returning at once to India. She started without the delay of a day. Her family were amazed at her sudden and inexplicable resolve, at her haste, and more than all at her cold avoidance of them. She would not kiss those who were dearest to her, nor touch their hands at parting. In India she knew that she could make the remnant of her life useful to other lepers. She reached India, and went immediately to a settlement of lepers under the care of one of the Scotch churches. There were nearly six hundred of these people within twenty miles, all going steadily toward death by a way full of nameless horrors.

The cross that was laid upon this disciple was indeed heavy, but she took it up bravely, setting aside all personal and selfish considerations, and turned her face to follow Christ.—Expository Times.

Whosoever Would Save His Life Shall Lose It

Sundar Singh goes about India telling others about the love of our Savior. He wants people to know the true God and be saved from sin. He wants to see this whole world made Christian. One day he crossed a range of mountains in a heavy snowstorm. While on the road he was joined by a stranger from Tibet. The cold was bitter, and Sundar Singh and his companion began to despair of reaching their destination alive. Just then they saw ahead of them, and thirty feet below the path, a man who had slipped off the trail, and had fallen down into the snow unconscious.

Sundar Singh asked his companion to help him carry the unconscious man to a village. The man from Tibet replied that no one but a fool would think of trying to save another in that terrible storm when he could barely get across the mountains himself, and hurried away leaving Sundar Singh with the unconscious man.

Sundar Singh crawled down the side of the hill, picked up the man and put him across his shoulders, and then slowly struggled along the path once more. He had not gone very far when he saw his former companion sitting by the wayside. He called to him, but received no answer—and then he saw that the man from Tibet was frozen to death. Sundar Singh, however, because of the awful struggle he had in carrying the injured man, found that he himself had become warmed by the exertion, and as a result of this warmth, and the rubbing of his body against the body of the injured man, the man he carried gradually became warmer and came to, and when they reached the village, was fully alive and very grateful for what the good Christian had done.

That is a good story, and I think it tells us something we all know, and which our Lord put into words when he said, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."—Arthur H. Limouze.

Sentence Sermons

Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Paul.

Increasing knowledge of Jesus requires increasing imitation of Jesus.—Robert E. Speer.

This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What do Lk. 8.2 and Jn. 19.25 tell us about Mary Magdalene? 2. How did the stone fasten the entrance of a tomb? 3. Describe "the place where they laid him" as told in Jn. 20.5-7. 4. Why is Peter especially mentioned in verse 7? 5. What was Christ's final commission to his disciples, verses 15-18? 6. When did Jesus speak the words of our Golden Text? 7. What effect did the Resurrection have upon the disciples?

LESSON II—APRIL 8

THE RESURRECTION

GOLDEN TEXT: Because I live, ye shall live also. John 14.19

LESSON Mark 16.1-20

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 15.20-26

MARK 16.1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. 3 And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? 4 and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. 5 And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen: he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8 And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THREE WOMEN VISIT THE TOMB OF CHRIST, verses 1-4. Very early on Sunday morning, just as the sun was rising Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb of Christ for the purpose of anointing his body with spices. Mary Magdalene was from the village of Magdala, north of Tiberias. Jesus had freed her from demon possession, Lk. 8.2. She had been one of the little group near the cross, Jn. 19.25. The Greek words translated *Mary the mother of Jesus,* reads literally, "Mary of James," and may mean either the daughter or the wife of James. It is thought that she was the mother of James the less and of Joses, Mk. 15.40. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the disciples James and John. As these women went on their way to the tomb they kept asking themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" The stone was probably a cylindrical one which could be rolled to either side in a groove at the base of the opening, but was too heavy for the women themselves to move, being "exceeding great." As they approached, they saw that the stone had been rolled back.

The Three Marys Peschel

How common it is for us to worry about difficulties which do not exist! There is an Indian legend which says that a traveler once had his way blocked by what looked like an impenetrable rampart of thorns. When, however, he advanced upon it, the thorn hedge turned out to be mist. The great stones we dread we often find have been rolled away. "Let us trust our love rather than our fears, and remember that courage is always the truest wisdom."

II. THE LORD IS RISEN, verses 4-8. While Mary Magdalene ran to tell Peter and John that the stone was removed, the other women entered the tomb and saw

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ROCK TOMB, GORDON'S CALVARY

a young man arrayed in a white robe (an angel) sitting within. Luke 24.4 speaks of two men, and in Matthew 28 an angel is sitting upon the stone without the tomb, but, as the One Volume Commentary observes, "Such slight discrepancies harmonize well with the excited feelings which such a vision would be likely to produce. Minute and detailed agreement in independent narratives under such circumstances would be suspicious."

The young man in the tomb said to the women, "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here."

"Instead of its being surprising that there was a resurrection on Easter morning, let us ask ourselves if it would not have been more surprising if there had been no resurrection. Would it not have been indeed amazing if the life in Christ had come to a full stop on the day of the crucifixion? Of course, if that life had come to such a stop, we should never have heard of the life at all; but how amazing to think that a life like Jesus' could stop! Peter had the right angle from which to view the Resurrection when he declared that it was impossible for death to hold Christ" (F. J. McConnell).

"He is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him!" The place as Peter and John saw it is described in Jn. 20.5-7.

"The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grave, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die" (Richard Watson Gilder).

"But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." The promise is recorded in Mt. 26.32. Peter is especially mentioned. The last time Peter had seen his Lord was in the judgment hall where he had thrice denied him. "He was mentioned by name lest he should despair because of his denial," said the Venerable Bede, the father of English history. The message meant to Peter that Christ had forgiven all. No wonder he ran with John to the tomb and in his eagerness outran his companion. Listen to him as he afterwards spoke of the Resurrection to the multitude at Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

The women fled from the tomb, trembling and astonished, and because of their fear they said not a word to any one. This was their first reaction. Later they delivered their message: see Mt. 28.8; Lk. 24.10; Jn. 20.2.

"O Christian women, walking confidently your plain path, in the radiance of a day made possible to you only because of a risen Christ whose religion has in it a place for womanhood, is your tongue also tied that you do not 'go and tell'? Do fears of one sort or another benumb you into dumbness and make you in Christ's Kingdom, what you would have been in verity, had he not risen—a cipher?" (J. F. Fisher).

III. APPEARANCES OF CHRIST AFTER THE RESURRECTION, verses 9-14. Notice the space left in our Revised Version between verses 8 and 9, and see the explanation given under The Historical Background. Without entering the tomb, Mary Magdalene seems to have hastened at once to tell Peter and John that the stone was rolled away (Jn. 20.2) and then to have returned, and it was while standing there weeping that Christ appeared to her (Jn. 20.15). She told her amazing story to the friends of Jesus, but they disbelieved. They had forgotten their Lord's assurance that he would rise again, plainly as he had spoken it.

"Truth that is only half understood, however plainly spoken, is often forgotten when the time to apply it comes. We are told that the disbelief of the disciples in the Resurrection, after Christ's plain prediction of it, is 'psychologically impossible.' Such big words are imposing, but the objection is shallow. These disciples are not the only people who forget in the hour of need the thing which it most concerned them to remember, and let the clouds of sorrow hide starry promises which would have turned mourning into dancing, and night into day" (Alexander Maclaren).

"Christ was manifested in another form" to two people on their way into the country; seemingly this is a reference to the two on their way to Emmaus, Lk. 24.13. When they reported the appearance to others, they were not believed.

And afterwards he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating, and he reproved them for not believing the words of those who had seen him after his resurrection.

Our belief in the Resurrection rests partly upon the lack of expectancy on the part of the apostles that he would rise, in their utter unpreparedness for the glorious news. The tremendous truth is that Jesus is alive. The empty grave was the negative proof. The appearances were the positive proof.

IV. THE FINAL COMMISSION, verses 15-18. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" was Christ's final commission to his followers. "Dismay, bewilderment, staggering surprise, accompanied by fear—these seem to have been their first impression. Then came emotions of shame and bitter self-reproach (induced by the loving rebuke of Christ himself) that they had been so slow to believe in the glorious transformation of their Master. Such paralyzing thoughts were soon replaced by the overwhelming consciousness that they were commissioned to proclaim a new evangel to mankind. This was quickly followed by a sense of power. The Risen Christ accompanied them everywhere, inspiring their message" (R. H. Coats).

V. THE ASCENSION, verses 19, 20. Forty days intervened between the Resurrection and the Ascension. At the close of his last interview with his disciples Jesus "was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."

"I would urge that we seize every possible opportunity of getting into the company of those who care for Christ, who love to think and speak of him. For it was to the hearts that loved and longed for him that he appeared in the days after his resurrection, and that he has been wont to appear in all the days since" (Charles Brown).

"A cloud received him out of their sight," Acts 1.9. As Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown observes, we may ask a host of questions and find ourselves groping in the mist. How did he rise? To what height was he visible? Where did his body go? What became of his garments? "The writers of the New Testament did not undertake to answer any of these questions. They personally sought to withdraw the attention of men from this mysterious event and fix it upon the spiritual activities of the apostles who set about the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on earth. When we speak of 'ascension' we use language in its popular rather than in its scientific sense. There is really no 'up' nor 'down' in this wide, roomy universe where we find ourselves. If you went from here to the moon you might call it 'going up to the moon.' But when you reached the moon and looked back, you would not be looking down. There, hanging above you in the sky, would be the huge bulk of this old earth. There is no absolute 'up' or 'down.' When we speak of 'the ascension of Christ,' therefore, we do not mean that he went up and up and up, until at last he arrived, no one knows where. We mean that he withdrew his visible, local, tangible presence from the eyes of men. He went into that unseen world of spiritual forces which are everywhere and forever effective" (Charles Reynolds Brown).

"I envy not The Twelve, nearer to me is he;
The life he once lived on earth, he lives again in me.
Ascended now to God, my witness there to be;
His witness here am I, because his Spirit dwells in me"
(M. D. Babcock).

"The outstanding effect of the Resurrection was the resurrection of the disciples." They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs (miracles) that followed. "They went back to Jerusalem in a mood far removed from one of mourners. Aside from the Supper, which was really an occasion in which they thought of the Lord as yet among them, I do not recall any services for the Lord which we would think of as memorial services—no services in which the backward look prevailed. The disciples came to take the living Christ as a fact of experience" (Francis J. McConnell).

"Jesus went back to his home, not to forget those who were left behind. He was like the strong swimmer who has reached the shore, not merely to save his life, but to establish communication with the wreck and so bring the perishing men safe to land" (Thomas Champness).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Brought spices, that they might come and anoint him, verse 1. At one time the wasteful expenditure connected with funerals was so great as to involve serious difficulties to the poor, who would not be outdone by their neighbors. The folly extended not only to the funeral rites, the burning of spices at the grave, and the depositing of money and valuables in the tomb, but even to luxury in the wrappings of the dead body. At last a much-needed reform was introduced by Rabbi Gamaliel, who left directions that he was to be buried in simple linen garments. In recognition of this a cup is to this day emptied to his memory at funeral meals.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What prophecy of his sufferings and death did Jesus make to his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi? What led him to tell them this?

The Resurrection

At Cæsarea Philippi, after Peter's great pronouncement, "Thou art the Christ," Jesus began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. The rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection all took place, and today being Easter we turn to Mark's account of that first glad Easter Day.

The Gospels give us no account of the actual resurrection of Jesus. Matthew is the only Evangelist who speaks of the event itself, and he does so in a vague manner, not stating that anyone saw it: "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men." The other Evangelists begin with the fact that the stone at the tomb was found rolled away.

The Time

The crucifixion took place Friday, April 7, A. D. 30; and the burial was that afternoon in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa. Saturday a guard was stationed at the tomb. Early on the morning of Sunday the women found the tomb empty.

We keep the Sunday after the first full moon after the twenty-first of March as Easter, thus following the Jewish Passover, at which Jesus was crucified and buried. Many people are interested in having the Christian world agree to observe the Sunday nearest April fifteenth as Easter, and in time this may come to pass.

The Last Twelve Verses of Mark 16

In the Vatican at Rome is preserved the Codex Vaticanus, which is the oldest manuscript extant of the New Testament. It lies in a glass case open at the last chapter of Mark, and it ends with the words "for they feared" ("for they were afraid," our Revised Version reads) of verse 8. The last twelve verses as found in our Bibles appear in some later manuscripts. In one of them, between the eighth and ninth verses these words are inserted: "Of the Presbyter Ariston." Ariston, according to Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis about 125 A. D., was one of the disciples of the Lord, not one of The Twelve, but one of his early followers. It is believed that he wrote this fragment of the Gospel about 75 to 90 A. D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Since the time of Constantine the tomb above which towers the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been the traditional place of the burial of Christ. It was for the possession of this tomb that the Crusades were undertaken. We know that Christ was buried outside the walls of Jerusalem, and since archæologists have not been able to determine the exact location of the old wall at this point, we cannot be sure that this site was "without the walls." Archæologists are certain that the old wall was beneath the Damascus Gate, and outside that gate is "Gordon's Calvary," or Skull Hill, where in a little garden there is a "Garden Tomb." In a tomb much like that one, quite possibly on that very hill, Christ was buried.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Hugh Price Hughes referred in an address to three renowned Englishmen of his day, Michael Faraday, Robert Browning and John Bright, as convincing witnesses to the truth of the presence of Christ in human consciousness. His argument became compelling, however, only when he added: "Let me also, in all humility, bear my personal testimony. The experience of which I speak is my own experience. For thirty years I have lived in the light of that great revelation of God's love, which was given to me when I was a schoolboy in Wales." Can you personally testify to your belief in the truth of the resurrection of Christ and his presence in the world today?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Beginning the Lesson

There is a quatrain of an old Persian poet with which you are all familiar:—

"Strange, is it not, that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,
Not one returned to tell us of the road,
Which to discover we must travel through."

And there is the familiar question of an ancient Hebrew, Job by name, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job's question is answered by the One who passed through the door of Darkness and returned, and who said, "Because I live ye shall live also."

"O morning of the resurrection, break upon our souls, too often overwhelmed by sordid doubts and fears! Dawn upon the universal church, that it may go forth conquering and to conquer in the name of the risen Christ! Shine into the trysting places where we make our feeble prayers, and give us faith to realize that he ever liveth to make intercession for us! Shine into our night of sorrow, that, looking from the darkness of an open grave to the glory of the open heavens, we may praise him in whom life and mortality are brought to light!"

If Christ Had Not Risen

Some have taken the ground that a belief in immortality is not essential to the Christian life, or at least to a very good and satisfying life in the world. Such a conception of life is unthinkable to us. If we could believe that so supremely good a life as that of Jesus ended on the cross at Calvary, our faith in a moral universe would suffer irreparable collapse. The distinction between virtue and vice, hatred and love, light anld darkness would fade into nothingness. Amid such wreckage of moral values, whence would come the incentives to high and noble living? The lower animals, who have never felt the throb of an immortal hope or experienced the yearning for a home and a fellowship which this world does not supply, would be objects of envy, and the surest road to peace would be oblivion.—The New Outlook.

Christ Converted a Dream into a Reality

The thought of resurrection and immortality was in the heart of mankind from the very beginning. When the mummy of a famous beauty, one of the queens of Egypt, was discovered in the tombs, it held in its withered hand a plant of the rose of Jericho, a symbol of the resurrection. This queen lived and died long before the coming of Christ. So the great nations, even whilst darkness covered the earth, dreamed of a future life and died in the hope of it.

Our Lord converted that dream into reality, and ever since his abundantly witnessed resurrection the hope of immortality has been one of the most influential facts in the experience of the race. The Rose of Sharon means infinitely more than the rose of Jericho—the one history, demonstration, assurance; the other suggestion, speculation, and the mere poetry of life. We need a great fact to confront death with, and we have that fact glorious and indisputable in the empty grave.—W. L. Watkinson.

The Manifested Christ

What has Jesus Christ been doing since he was parted from his disciples nineteen hundred years ago? As our thought follows him reverently out into the unseen realm our minds do not rest in the conception that he is solely or chiefly engrossed with supermundane concerns. This good earth, whose soil his feet pressed, into

whose human fellowships he gladly entered, for whose redemption he yearned and labored, must still interest the Son of God in his heavenly life.

Christ said he would manifest himself to the men and women whom he sent forth to be, as he was in the world, light, leaven and salt. Through the centuries those promises have again and again been fulfilled.

To the individual disciple he has made himself known. Men of trained spiritual perception like St. Francis, Zinzendorf, Rutherford and Wesley, who felt "the heart strangely warmed," have found the companionship of Jesus as real as that of any earthly friend. Nor is it the eminent saints only who have walked with him along earth's highways. Millions of the rank and file have known that Jesus was close at hand. Phillips Brooks used to speak of these periods as "Jesus moments!" They may be only occasional. They are not meant to be a substitute for that sense of the universal and enfolding presence of God to which Jesus introduces us, but for our comfort and assurance they condense at one burning point the life and touch of the unseen God.

It is true that this mystical relation to Jesus is not a constant or even a frequent factor in the experience of some of his most devoted and useful followers, but it is sufficiently attested throughout the large composite fellowship of Christ's disciples to make us sure that

"Where meek souls with love receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in."

Jesus has been manifested, and is manifested, in the permeation of society with his principles and spirit. The world is bad enough still, but the manners, broadly speaking, are gentler, business standards higher, laws more just, punishments more humane, home life purer. The advance of both political and industrial democracy is due to the influence of Jesus and his teachings. The revulsion of the civilized world from the sinister forces of greed and cruelty, which precipitated the war and marked its prosecution, is another sign that the world, perhaps unconsciously in many sections of it, is coming to think of human life and human relationships in the terms of Jesus. The radical changes that are sure to come will make still more evident his presence and power.—The Congregationalist.

Twentieth Century Arguments for a Belief in Immortality

We may as well confess that that relatively new science of psychic research will not help us much. It would be foolish to say this science may not some day make discoveries, and thinking of the men who have been and are today interested in it, it would be quite out of place to discredit it unduly, but for most of us it is still true that no ordinary mortal has ever manifested himself as alive after death, or has ever come into our mortal ken in such a way as to give any real assurance of the life beyond. Spiritualism doesn't help us any; perhaps it never will help us any.

But is there anything that will help us, any considerations apart from those traditional ones that some find it difficult to give the old-time weight to, that will give a real sense of conviction to our supposed faith in immortality? If we can find any arguments in favor of such a faith that shall stand the test of the light of a twentieth century day we ought to search for them. But if we can find that the twentieth century furnishes its own peculiar arguments in favor of human immortality we should not fail to stress them.

Certainly it must be admitted that faith in personal survival after death has actually lost some of its difficulty in this very day in which we live. For instance, the materialistic philosophy which so troubled our fathers, and which taught that the mind of man was so dependent upon the brain that when the latter perished the former perished with it, does not carry much weight with thoughtful men today. The whole trend of our thinking is in the direction of the idea that the mind, quite apart from the brain that it uses and through which it functions, is a spiritual entity within itself. The whole truth in regard to the influence of mind over matter, and the facts that the modern psychologist has been presenting to us in such a fascinating way in regard to the subconscious self and its place and function in life, make it almost inevitable that we should believe that the central human self is spiritual, not material, that it may have existed apart from the body, that it may continue to exist after the body has gone to decay. In reality from this point of view modern science isn't making it harder for us to believe in human survival after death, but vastly easier.

And has not our day something very positive to say about the value of that human self or personality which seems central to the life we know? To produce such a personality seems to have been the end and aim of the whole process of creation. If it took many hundreds of thousands of years to make a man we may be sure that it wasn't his body merely that was planned, but the mind or soul that should occupy it. And if it took millenniums to make that crowning thing, a human personality, can we think of it as passing out as if it were the thing of a day, of no permanent value at all?

Of course this does not give us a definite and positive answer to our question, but does it not at least suggest a reassuring thought that fits into the mode of the day's feeling and conviction? As a recent great writer has said—"Souls, if they are worth the making, are also worth the keeping, and the Universe would fail in its duty if it did not preserve them." And when we think of that Universe in terms of the God who was revealed in Jesus Christ, does not our conviction become doubly sure?—Editorial in The New Outlook.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Immortality. Easter Day tells us that death is the great illusion, that the spirit-life which ever sought to escape it is the great reality.—Cosmo Gordon Lang. See pages 181-187 of Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

2. Who shall roll us away the stone? See Chapter IX of The Breath of the Winds, by Frederick F. Shannon.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How was Jesus engaged just before he was transfigured? 2. What preceded the glorified face of Moses and Stephen? 3. What sort of "tabernacle" did Peter have in mind? 4. Why was Peter's remark about building shelters foolish? 5. Why was the thought wrong? 6. To whom did Jesus refer when he said that Elijah had come? 7. What did the Transfiguration do for the disciples? 8. For Jesus? 9. What is "a mountain top experience" today? 10. For what purpose is such an experience given?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS OUR LIVING LEADER

Beginning the Lesson

Here are two beautiful stanzas written by Minna Irving:—

All hail this joyous Easter morn,
When earth arises newly born.
The daffodil has left the mold
To praise the Lord with lips of gold;
The butterfly its coffin rends
And to the sunlit sky ascends;
And every bush and tree and clod
Uplifts an offering to God.

Salute this glorious Easter day
When angels rolled the stone away,
And from the dark and lowly door
The Lord, arisen, came of yore
His feet among the lilies white,
His garments aureoled with light,
And in His hands for thee and me
The gift of immortality.

What does the last sentence mean? The answer is in the words of our Golden Text: what is it? Our lesson text tells us how the disciples learned on the third day after his crucifixion that Jesus is alive. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Heart of Springtime

The name of the season is just another word for Easter Day. For what is "spring" but the lively symbolic description of the special event of Easter and of all the resurrections that follow in its train? Easter spreads its tonic message throughout the season that it crowns. Just as the keynote of Easter is the happy assurance

that life is lord of death, so the season of spring rushes in with a challenge of vitality and tells us all to be physically and morally on our marks, to set and to go! Shall we not then catch the spirit of this season, so vital and so full of hope? Shall we not learn the living message of this day, the quintessence of springtime, and win from Easter just that tremor of new life which every bird and every bud is showing? Else how tragic for us to walk head downward, unresponsive, while the very beasts that perish seem in their lowly measure to answer the Easter call.

What then does Easter Day mean? Boys and girls of Ohio and Georgia and Connecticut, and of all the forty-five other states that spangle our banner—so far away from that empty Judean tomb, yet so near to him who broke its seal—what will Easter, the heart of springtime mean to you, deep down in your heart, this very Easter Day?

The first message of Easter is the vitality of Truth. Truth cannot be quelled or killed. It is independent of the human thinker. We cannot create or destroy the Truth. It is. It transcends time and creation. Before Abraham was, Truth is. Easter, visibly showing that positive life conquers negative death, proclaims the basic creed that Truth has been, is and ever will be so.

Am I getting beyond you—you, whose brows are knitted as you face the old world, the world that is ever new? Am I juggling with words? Explain it this way to yourself: In the theater the scenic artist employs distance to complete his illusion. You must not go too near. You must beware of familiarity! That lovely landscape is just painted canvas and netting. That mellow distance rests on nothing but dusty lumber. With Truth it is all the other way. The nearer you get the better. Come and see, taste and see, handle and see—these are Truth's invitations. Before even we learn the creed of our religion let us grasp the creed on which all creeds repose—that you cannot get behind Truth nor will it ever disappoint you. The nearer the fairer; the nearer the clearer; the nearer the dearer. The trustworthiness of Truth is the creed behind all creeds. That is the first trumpet call of Easter.

Again, our Easter disciples will quickly discern a certain glistening purity in the season, urging them toward moral renovation. Consider the Easter lily and be ennobled. I defy you to pluck that saffron crocus in the garden and not feel the chaste charm of springtime. Can you stand on the margin of the woodland, alive to the awakening of spring, and not experience an ecstasy, a standing out from yourself, filled with long, long thoughts of destiny and daring that you would be half abashed to confess? Yes, Easter puts spring into the conscience. A throbbing desire for whatsoever things are true and of good report fills these dingy hearts of ours. For, after all, they are dingy. Perhaps it is owing to our very devotion to routine and duty that somehow we rub the glistening sheen from human life. It ought to be such fun, and yet what a succession of chores we make of it! Then comes Easter, with its central conquering Figure, resplendent in the garden, putting to shame our dingy dutifulness as well as our shoddy second-rateness. All of us, the good and the indifferent, need this Easter tonic of the new start, the new method, the new view. To the good, Easter says: "Cheer up, love God and do as you please." And to the rest of us who are discontented with our winter life Easter calls: "Awake! Look forward, and not back! Doff the old ways, don the shining armor of the new day." The central moral message of Easter, I am sure, is this: Be not dingy and dowdy in your dutifulness, but live with a smile and a cheer; or, as an ancient seer expressed it, "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing."

This putting on of shining moral armor, this starting out anew, suggests a third message of Easter to the modern girl and boy. It is the message of the necessity of newness. Now, some people interpret Easter newness as simply newness of clothes. There is a certain moral value in new clothes. They encourage self-respect. And sometimes we can change our mind when we change our clothes. Thus far, then, changes of raiment serve as a useful turn. The boy who wears a bright new tie or the girl pleased with her nice new hat on Easter morning is behaving naturally. Neatness is laudable. Trigness is a little compliment that we pay society. But listen to this, the dictum of a keen observer, the head of a large department store: "Easter is a distinctly selfish period. At that time nearly everyone who enters my store is bent on some purchase for his or her personal use. On the other hand, at Christmas all is changed. Every purchaser is pretty certain to have in view one or two gifts that he can make." That is our own experience. We have seen the tense, acquisitive faces of the Easter purchasers.

Easter a selfish season! How comes it so? If we give presents to friends and the needy at Christmas time because of the Big Present once lovingly given to the world, shall we celebrate Easter, the feast when that Gift was made ours forever, by merely decorating ourselves and making presents to ourselves? For repentance we are enjoined to rend our heart and not our garment. For grateful praise, not new clothing but renewed character will be the proper medium. Try not to let the innocent symbolism of a bit of finery degenerate into selfish slavery of clothes. It is wide of the mark of the season's message. Easter withers in the oppressive vacuum of selfishness. But the sunny freshness of altruism makes it blossom with meaning.

Easter is the heart of springtime. Let it prove the gate for us into a fresher and freer realm. Believe more fundamentally, live more brightly, share more readily. —Samuel S. Drury, in The Youth's Companion.

"As It Began to Dawn"

That first Easter sunrise was a long, long time ago. But in many large spaces of the earth it is still the dark hour before sunrise. There has been no Easter dawn. Indeed, throughout Asia there is just discernible the rising of the sun which is beginning to throw the light of Christian truth in the receding circle of darkness.

There is no romance in history more fascinating than that tracing the oncoming of the Easter dawn to all the world. The story of the spread of Christianity could be told in terms of ships. The ships, little and great, which have carried the messengers of Christ to all the world, have literally been loaded with a cargo of sunrise. We see the beginning of the story when Paul takes ship on the Mediterranean. A few centuries later brave and daring hearts pushed beyond the gates of Hercules at Gibraltar, and sailed up to that abode of wild savages known as Britain. There they planted the Cross by the seashore. Centuries later over the Atlantic was carried the good news of the Easter sunrise and the living Christ. Today the ships plowing across the Pacific, each with missionaries on board, bring a new dawn into Asia.—The Christian Advocate.

How a Hindu Fakir Learned the Good News of the Living Savior

A Hindu holy fakir with matted hair and ash-besmeared body was sitting in deep meditation beneath a tree, when he saw a torn leaf from a New Testament. Reading it, strange thoughts entered his hungry soul—they seemed "to take him by the hand and lead him straight to the Father." He sought out a man to teach him of this wonderful Book, and his guide was an Englishman who wore a black crape on his sleeve. Supposing it to be the mark of a Christian, he placed a similar one on his own arm. Later, he entered into a Christian church to hear its truths expounded. At the close of the service he announced that he, too, was a believer, and pointed to his crape-bedecked arm in proof thereof. When told that the band was an English sign of the death of some friend, the fakir thought a moment, and then said: "But I read in the Book that my loved One has died; so I shall wear it in memory of him." Later still, he grasped the idea of the Resurrection, and then realized that his "loved One" was alive forevermore. Thereupon a great joy filled his heart, and the light of the Resurrection shone in his face; that, henceforth, was his sign of discipleship.—The Christian.

Sentence Sermons

Lift your glad voices in triumph on high
For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die.—Henry Ware.

I know not how that Joseph's tomb
Could solve death's mystery;
I only know a living Christ,
Our immortality.—Harry Webb Farrington.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What does "transfiguration" mean? 2. What does Luke say Jesus was doing as he was transfigured? (Lk. 9.29.) 3. What excuse does Luke make for Peter's foolish remark? (Lk. 9.33.) 4. Why was his remark foolish? 5. What did Peter say about this event in his Second Epistle, 1.16-18? 6. When was the face of Moses transfigured? (Ex. 34.29, 30.) 7. Why is a face at times more beautiful than at others?

TRANSFIGURATION AND SERVICE

GOLDEN TEXT: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. John 15.5

LESSON Mark 9.2-29 DEVOTIONAL READING John 15.1-8

MARK 9.2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them; 3 and his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. 6 For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid. 7 And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him. 8 And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

17 And one of the multitude answered him, Teacher, I brought unto thee my son, who hath a dumb spirit; 18 and wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out; and they were not able.

25 And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out: and *the boy* became as one dead; insomuch that the more part said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose. 28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, *How is it* that we could not cast it out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TRANSFIGURATION, verses 2-8. Six days after Peter's expression of his conviction that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus took Peter, James and John apart from the rest and ascended a high mountain where he was transfigured before them. The other disciples may have been too superstitious or too dull of comprehension for such a revelation of his glory.

"The longer we live the more profoundly we believe that no one has actually more than two or three friends. He is a friend—and only he—to whom you can lay bare your heart without the pledge of secrecy. The real friend is interested in you—your joys, your triumphs, your failures become his very own."

Luke 9.29 says that the fashion of his countenance was altered; Matthew 17.2 says his face did shine as the sun, "the glory of the Godhead burst through the veil of the flesh." "It was not a splendor that fell on him from without, and lighted him up; the glory came from within; it corresponded to something going on in his mind" (Davison). It was as he prayed, Matthew and Luke tell us, that this transformation took place. The story is preceded and followed in the Gospels by Christ's predictions of suffering, death and resurrection. The Transfiguration was a preparation for the events so near at hand.

"On that mountain, he laid himself like another Isaac on the altar, and he knew that the sacrifice would be demanded. The very glory of the event contains a hint of the struggle which had been going on in his mind. He was no impassive hero of a romantic history: he was a Soul in the agony of a momentous spiritual transaction. The hour had come when he was to make a voluntary dedication of himself for a sacrifice than which history knows no sublimer: and the self-consecration was destined to be met by a distinct communication of divine approval. As he was praying about his Passion he entered into the ecstasy of oneness with the heavenly Father: in the heart of Jesus all the holy resolutions of a lifetime were encouraged and strengthened, as the fashion of his countenance became changed."

"Does it never strike you that our Lord grew depressed; that his soul was troubled; that the load he had to carry became well-nigh insupportable, and that 'as he prayed' the sadness and gloom passed, and other facts, bright, shining, and glorious, came into view: unalterable facts of the Father's love

and the Father's approval; that there was another world besides this, with all its sin and disappointment and injustice, with all its strife and darkness and sorrow? I do not suggest that our Lord's consciousness of that world grew dim and clouded. But I am quite sure that ours does, and that there is nothing that we need more than to have that consciousness clarified. If that world where God reigns and where redeemed souls see his face and worship before his throne with the worship of perfect obedience be a fact, it is a fact of which we can never afford to be unconscious" (Charles Brown).

His garments became glistering (shining), whiter than any fuller could whiten them. (A fuller is one who fulls, thickens cloth by moistening, beating and pressing it.) The three chosen disciples stood on the hillside lost in amazement at the wondrous face of their Lord. Then appeared to them Elijah and Moses. "When that which is perfect comes," wrote Paul, "then that which is in part is done away." Moses and Elijah soon disappeared from view, and they saw no one any more, save Jesus only.

"What is to be understood by the vision of Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus? One can understand how Jesus, gaining new strength in prayer and communion with God, could experience such exaltation of spirit that new light shone from his face, new dignity from his figure, and that his whole aspect was changed. But can we suppose that Moses and Elijah came to talk with him? One thing is certain: whether Moses and Elijah were actually there or not, this part of the account shows that the disciples had gained a new appreciation of Jesus. Moses was the emancipator of Israel and her reputed lawgiver—the founder of the Hebrew nations. Elijah was the first of the great prophets; his ministry began a new era which transformed the religion of Israel. At the beginning of the Christian era, Elijah was regarded as a kind of semi-heavenly guardian of the Jewish people. Moses and Elijah were the two greatest of the religious founders of the past. That these two should seem to the disciples to be there on Mount Hermon talking with Jesus, is clear proof that at last the disciples were putting Jesus in his right place. He was greater than they. Moses and Elijah came to talk with him—to pay him homage" (George A. Barton).

We learn from Luke's account that the disciples had been asleep, and saw the heavenly vision when suddenly awakened. "It may be the disciples were confused and half hypnotized by mist on the mountain side," Dr. Theodore H. Robinson suggests, "and that all thought they saw things which really existed in their own minds only. In other words, believing Jesus to be the Christ, they were ready to see and to accept a unique vision of Jesus. Some support for this suggestion may be found in the fact that they recognized Moses and Elijah at once. We have no evidence that there were even traditional representations of the ancient heroes of Israel which would make it possible for them to be so surely identified. Such identification appears to have been necessarily intuitive and would point to an experience as subjective as (though more real than) those which come to us in dreams. At the same time, there will not be a few readers of the narrative who will feel that rationalizing of this kind can only detract from the real power of the story, and that the record is to be accepted at its face value."

While the vision lasted Peter answered and said unto Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here." Peter "answered," not any question put to him, but the situation as he found it. "Let us make three tabernacles (or booths)," he continued; "one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah," for, as Mark says, he knew not what to answer: for they became sore afraid. A cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud they heard a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." "The Bath-Qol, or Voice from heaven, was a definite Jewish expectation. It was part of the sign granted to John the Baptist."

Dr. M. D. Babcock has a fine comment upon Peter's words: "If the mercies of God have blessedly beset us, let us not build three tabernacles that we may abide; but rather, like Paul, call the places where our mercies meet us Three Taverns, then push on, thank God, and take courage. Every attainment is to be a footing for new attempts, and every goal a point of departure." "It is work that keeps faith sweet and strong," is the comment of Dr. J. D. Jones. "And though we leave the mount of vision we do not leave the Lord. He is with us in the shop, the office, and the place of toil. The only way to lose the Lord would be to refuse to leave the mount. If Peter had stayed on the hill, he would have found himself alone."

II. THE TRUE ELIJAH, verses 9-13. On the way down from the mountain Jesus charged them to tell no one what they had seen until after he had risen from the dead. Wonderingly they questioned among themselves what Jesus could have meant by the rising again from the dead.

"The Apostles, slow to comprehend Jesus and quick to misinterpret his intentions, have had more successors in the church than has Jesus himself" (Charles Wagner).

"How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come?" the disciples asked Jesus. They had just seen Elijah; why must they not speak about this vision, since they could thereby assure the scribes, who laid stress on the coming first of Elijah, that Jesus was the Messiah? "Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things," Jesus replied, quoting a saying of the scribes, it is thought, who held that Elijah would restore the golden pot of manna, the vessel of anointing oil, and the vessel of water for purification; see Mal. 4.5. "But I say unto you, that Elijah is come (referring to John the Baptist), and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him." The death of John the Baptist is recorded in the sixth chapter of Mark.

III. THE CURE OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY, verses 14-29. On coming to the other disciples, who had been left at the foot of the mountain, Jesus and the three saw a great crowd gathered; among them were scribes who had undoubtedly been trying to undermine the influence of Jesus during his absence. As Jesus approached, all hastened to him. "What question ye with them?" Jesus asked. A man in the crowd answered that he had a son afflicted with a dumb spirit whom he had brought for Jesus to cure. In Matthew's account, the father tells Jesus that his son is epileptic, and the symptoms which the father proceeds to describe are those of an epileptic—the falling down, the foaming at the mouth, the grinding of teeth. The father had besought the nine disciples to cure him, but they could not.

In his rebuke Jesus seems to include the nine disciples, the father, the scribes, and the whole crowd, all of whom were lacking in faith, when he exclaimed, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" "His intercourse with people so spiritually dull had become almost intolerable. He was like a man coming from the pure mountain air into the stifling atmosphere of a hut, where he feels he can scarcely breathe. Just as the air in the hut is needlessly fetid, for the windows could be opened, so the torpor of the disciples' trustfulness was unnecessary, for prayer would open the channel for the strength of God. The disciples were baffled needlessly. That was the sting of the situation" (R. C. Gillie).

"These words give us pause. How much of our self-confidence is just masked unbelief? We, too, fail because the communications with the Source of power are not working properly, and our failure is needless" (R. C. Gillie).

"Bring him unto me," Jesus commanded. The afflicted boy was brought to Jesus, and at once fell on the ground and wallowed foaming at the mouth. Just as a physician would do, Jesus began to inquire about the patient. "How long has he been thus troubled?" "From a child," was the father's answer, who then poured into sympathetic ears the story of repeated alarms. In his paroxysms the boy had fallen into fire and into water. "But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us," the father implored.

"If *thou* canst!" Jesus exclaimed. "All things are possible to him that believeth." It was not a question of Christ's power, but of the father's faith. At once the father met the challenge: "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

"It is as he strives to believe that he is conscious of the pull of his old nature, of how much he has to overcome in order to believe. Faith is never easy in the sense that it requires no effort. Faith makes a serious demand upon our powers of will and imagination so that in one way it is wholesome to feel our unbelief, for this experience is a proof that we are alive and reaching out to faith. The foam at the bow of the vessel is an indication that it is making headway against wind and tide" (James Moffatt).

The excited crowd about them was becoming great, and Jesus turned quickly to the boy. "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." After a wild shriek the boy lay before them as one dead. Indeed, the crowd cried out that he was dead. "We cannot explain this last ex-

plosion of disease and devilishness. It was as if the life of the boy was so intertwined with what had possessed him that all his vitality departed with it." But it was not so. Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up. And the boy stood quietly before them.

"Some of us have seen a like struggle before a devil-haunted man gets clear from the awful embrace. Sin seems more deeply rooted in some men than in others. It almost 'tears the vitals' out of some men before they go free. There are conversions which alarm us for the moment. But the result is as beneficial as in this case. We have to learn to wrestle with the powers of evil which enswathe the souls of men" (R. C. Gillie).

"How is it that we could not cast it out?" the disciples asked Jesus after they were in the house by themselves. "This kind," returned Jesus, "can come out by nothing, save by prayer." What was "this kind"? "Whatever other difference there really might be, none appear between this and other kinds, but that the unclean spirit had had possession of this poor patient from a child, and that confirmed his hold. When vicious habits are rooted by long usage, like chronic diseases they are hardly cured. The disciples must not think to do their work always with a like ease" (Matthew Henry). It was their lack of faith which was the trouble, as Matthew (17.19) gives Jesus' reply. Great faith and prevailing prayer go hand in hand.

We make up our minds to be magnanimous, and bitter thoughts come to expression: we try to overcome selfishness, and we utterly fail: we determine not to yield to a temptation, and it gets the better of us. "Why cannot we cast that spirit out?" we ask ourselves again and again. And there is just one answer—It can come out only by prayer.

How sharp is the contrast between the scene on the mountain height, radiant with the glory of God, the world of the ideal, and the scene at the mountain's base, overcast by the need of man, the world of the real! And how clear is the lesson of the two combined, that the world of the ideal and the world of the real are one world, that mountain raptures are followed by valley responsibilities, that the vision of the glory of God heartens one for the grappling with the problem of the good of man.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Let us make three tabernacles, verse 5. He proposed to do what any Galilean peasant would do today, if arrested by nightfall on a bleak and exposed hillside. He would at once, rather than travel in the night, look out for brushwood and rushes and quickly weave a few loose, rough hurdles to form a screen from the wind.—H. B. Tristram.

When passing through the village of Banias (the modern Cæsarea Philippi), I saw a curious sight. On the roof of every house there was a kind of booth made of leaves and branches woven together, and supported on long poles, like the canopy of a four-post bed. It was made mostly of oleander bushes—the willow of Scripture —whose leaves do not when they wither fall off the twigs. During the summer months the heat inside the squalid mud-houses is unbearable; and the inhabitants take refuge in the airier dwellings on the roof; and the thick screen of foliage above their heads protects them from the heavy dews at night. It was of such booths, or tabernacles, that Peter was thinking.—Hugh Macmillan, in The Expository Times.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

When have we heard of three disciples being more favored than the rest? Who were the three? When did we hear that a voice said to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son"? In a recent lesson what remark did Peter make that was both foolish and wrong? When were the disciples given power to cast out demons?

The Purpose of the Transfiguration

It was a week after Peter made his great acknowledgment that he knew Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. He and the rest of the disciples, however, had not yet grasped the true mission of the Messiah. They still thought of him as the expected king of the Jews. And Jesus had told them that he must be condemned

and crucified. To face such a fact they needed heartening. The vision on the Mount met their need, and whatever might happen thereafter they could never doubt his Messiahship. For Jesus himself, as we have seen, the Transfiguration was a preparation for the Cross.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Mount of Transfiguration, some one has well observed, does not concern geography. The traditional Mount, however, is Mount Tabor, on the northeastern boundary of the Plain of Esdraelon. Today the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches have each a shrine there marking the exact spot of the scene! We know that at this time there was a village on the top of Mount Tabor which had been fortified against Vespasian, and therefore it could not have been here that Jesus went "apart" with his disciples. They were in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi the week before, and all scholars agree that the scene of the Transfiguration must have been one of the three peaks of Mount Hermon, which towers above Cæsarea Philippi, nine thousand feet above sea level. Dr. Hugh Macmillan, speaking of the cloud that overshadowed Christ and the disciples, recalls how quickly the mist gathers on a high mountain and how quickly it disappears.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The disciples wondered at their lack of success. They had done their best in their efforts to restore the demon-possessed to sanity, and they had miserably failed. "How is it that we could not cast it out?" they wonderingly questioned. How often that same question comes to the thoughts of Church School teachers! To the mind of the teacher of Intermediates come thoughts of the indifference of this pupil, the continued absence of another, the selfishness or pride or other sin or faults of yet others. "Why cannot I cast it out?" The leader of adults dwells in thought upon the argumentativeness of one member, the silence of another, the disinterestedness of a third, the lack of a sense of responsibility of many, the unlimited possibilities of the class which have never been brought out, and he cries, "Why cannot I cast it out?" As such teachers turn to the lesson for the day, perhaps they will find there the answer in the words of Jesus, "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Effect of the Supremacy of the Higher Nature

"There is sometimes in the face a solar light which rises from the activity of the higher nature when conscience is supreme." Who can say but that when "the higher nature is put into full action that radiant look might beam from the whole man"! Who that has looked into the face of Phillips Brooks in some of those great hours in Trinity Church, Boston, as he pleaded with men for their souls, or into the face of Maud Ballington Booth as she made intercession on behalf of the poor moral failures in the prisons, has not seen there the gleams of that "solar light" which comes by the supremacy of the higher nature within?

It may be that our Lord, walking already in the shadow of the cross and foreseeing the tragic end of his beneficent career on earth, felt at this hour an especial need of prayer. He went up into the mountain to wait upon the Father that he might renew his strength. And there he dwelt in the power of those high purposes of self-devotement to which he had just given expression and in the ennobling sense of an exalted fellowship with the Father until the radiance of his inner life shone through the temple of flesh.

It is written that when Moses came down from the Mount with the tables of the law in his hands and in his heart and in his hope for Israel, his face shone so that the sordid worshipers of the golden calf could not look upon him. It is written that when Stephen was on trial for his life before the Sanhedrin and was permitted to give a reason for the glorious hope that was in him, "all that sat in the council looking steadfastly on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." It is written in the annals of age-long and world-wide experience that when any

life yields itself to the supremacy of the highest there comes into the very face a new look of light and joy, a veritable spiritual effulgence. If we accept the principle underlying these facts of experience and carry it up to the nth power, may we not find at the summit the very phenomena here recorded in the narrative of the Transfiguration?—Charles Reynolds Brown, in The Master's Way.

Spiritual Knowledge Does Not Mean the Clearing Up of Mystery

An utterly new conception of the Person of Christ is imparted to Peter in this hour. Under the power of emotions he can neither resist nor control, he realizes the meaning and the influence of spiritual knowledge. Behold the new conflict of feelings within him. He is afraid, sorely afraid, bowed to the earth beneath the overshadowing cloud, beneath the sense of unfathomable mystery, beneath the luster of Omnipotent glory. Yet he is also at peace. With the greater mystery has come a new-born calmness, a sense of having been admitted into something greater than the world can give, and although he measures not his words, nor hardly knows what they are, a new created consciousness of the blessedness of the new knowledge forces from him the confession, "It is good to be here."

His experience is indeed unique in the circumstances attending it; but the substance of Peter's experience in that marvelous light of the Transfiguration is essentially the experience of all of us who, called from darkness into light, are finding out the meaning and the influence of spiritual knowledge. At the beginning of our Christian life we may have thought that the sense of mystery in connection with spiritual knowledge would pass away as we grow older, and that all things would become plain to us. At the beginning there were many things we could not understand; but, we thought, "I shall understand all presently." How different has been the real influence of advancing spiritual knowledge! With the marvelous light has come to us, as to Peter, the marvelous cloud, the more overwhelming sense of the infiniteness, the unfathomableness of truth; of the wonderfulness of God; of the tremendousness of the Divine purpose; of the impossibility of comprehending all that God is, all that God means.—Charles Cuthbert Hall, in Into His Marvelous Light.

Experience on the Mountain-top Is for the Sake of Service in the Valley

The appeal for help came hard upon the glorious experiences on the Mount. The close connection of the two events is noted in all the Synoptic Gospels, and it is significant. The true splendor of life at its best does not build tabernacles at the mountain-top that it may dwell securely apart from the world's pain and grief. It gathers to itself the full strength to be gained in such places of privilege and then comes down. It descends from that higher level where it prayed until its face shone, and the soul was caught up into the full enjoyment of exalted fellowship, that it may heal the hurts along the dusty pathway at the foot of the mountain.

"The social settlement inspired and sustained from some center of religious devotion, the summer camp for needy children made possible by the gifts and the personal devotion of those who have seen the radiant face of Christ, the outdoor sanitariums for tubercular patients from the crowded warrens of the poor in our great cities, all of them showing the word of Christian brotherhood made flesh and dwelling among us full of grace and truth, are visible projections of the glory of worship and communion into patient, lowly forms of unselfish service."

The Mount of Transfiguration and After

"It has been a wonderful month; the greatest experience of my life. Now I've got to go down to everyday, commonplace existence again."

That is what a young man said at the close of a great evangelistic campaign which had swept with unusual power through his town. Like Peter, he would have tarried on the mount. And, like Peter, the change from the transfiguration visions to the commonplaces of life was a severe and painful wrench.

But it should not have been so. The experiences of the mountain-top are only worth while as they prepare us for life and service when we descend to the plain. Professor James calls attention to the psychological importance of carrying out into life one's greatest uplifts. "When you have been stirred by oratory, or by music, or by picture, or example, act upon it, or you are worse off than as though you had never been stirred. Do something, if only to give a drink to a child or a chair to your old grandmother."

After the close of a great gathering in the early days of the Northfield Summer School, Henry Drummond said: "God does not make the mountain-tops to be in-

habited; they are not for the homes of men. We ascend the heights to catch a broader vision of our earthly surroundings, but we do not tarry there. The streams take their rise in the uplands, but quickly descend to gladden the fields and valleys below. We are to descend from a mount of privilege to a commonplace life—to our farms, our factories, our studies. This is not a downfall. Let life hold the true meaning, and all becomes sacred."

"Now I've got to go down to everyday, commonplace existence again." So said our young friend. The remark expressed more than he knew. It was an admission that the revival campaign in which he had taken a conspicuous part had brought to him no deep, abiding good. It had stirred his emotions. It had kindled his enthusiasm. The eager crowds, the big choir, and the swelling choruses, and the great stir among the people, had intoxicated him with a sort of religious exhilaration. But that was all. Such superficial things cannot be carried down to the plain. The memory of them makes life a more "commonplace existence."

What the young Christian needed was a transfiguration vision that would not fade away when the final chorus ended and the lights were turned out. What he needed was an experience so real and spiritual that it would go with him into his home and into his business, and glorify every "commonplace" of life. What he needed was the kind of spiritual dynamics that gives power and passion, and lives on and on with increasing serviceableness amid the everyday duties and burdens of life.—Condensed from Zion's Herald.

Two Lessons

"Your way is dark," the angel said,
"Because you downward gaze;
Look up! the sun is overhead;
Look up and learn to praise."
I looked. I learned: Who looks above
Will find in Heaven both Light and Love.

"Why upward gaze?" the angel said;
Have you not learned to know
The Light of God shines overhead
That men may work below?"
I learned: Who only looks above
May miss below the work of Love.

And thus I learned the lessons twain:
The heart whose treasure is above
Will gladly turn to earth again
Because the heavens is Love.
Yea, Love that framed the starry height
Came down to earth and gave it Light.

—The Bishop of Ripon.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Transfiguration. See Chapters XV-XIX of G. Campbell Morgan's The Crisis of the Christ; Chapter XLII of The Master's Way, by Charles Reynolds Brown; Chapter XIII of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce.

2. The power of exalted moments. See Chapter XXII of Phillips Brooks' Sermons for the Church Year.

3. Our need of being educated in faith.

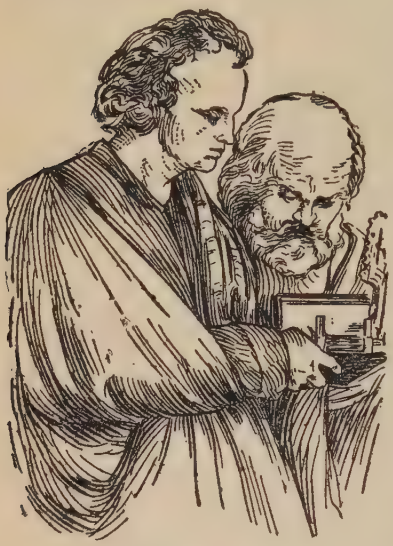
Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the teaching of the Old Testament in regard to divorce, as recorded in Dt. 24.1-4? 2. On what ground did Jesus amend the Old Testament? 3. What did Jesus teach concerning family life? 4. Do you apply the Golden Rule in your family life? 5. What sort of ideas about marriage and divorce are the young people of today receiving? 6. Why are divorces increasing in our land? 7. Is "incompatibility of temperament" a ground for divorce? How should it be met? 8. What is the cure for unhappy marriages? 9. What should be the divorce laws in our State?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
WHAT FAITH AND PRAYER CAN DO

Beginning the Lesson

A week has passed since Jesus questioned his disciples as to their knowledge of who he is, and Peter's answer rang so true: what was it? They have stayed meanwhile in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, and now they are going up Mount Hermon, Jesus and three of his disciples. Mount Hermon is a wondrously beautiful snow-capped mountain. Who were the three? Why do you think Jesus took only these three with him?



Peter and John Dürer

What Faith and Prayer Can Do

What was the lesson they learned by this experience? A lesson on prayer. Prayer can change surroundings, they discovered. It was while Jesus prayed that the scene was transformed. The dull, dark spot where they had lain down to sleep had become a bit of fairyland. Even Jesus' raiment glistened as if shot through with jewels. Will prayer do that for us? In a way, yes. Prayer lifts one into new regions, into a new atmosphere, into the quiet places of God.

Up on the mountain they had left Jesus alone, and when they awoke there were others with him—two of the mighty dead, two of the great leaders of the past were talking with him. Prayer does that for us. We pray for some dear, far-away friend, and the act calls up his face and his ways, brings him so vividly before us that it almost seems as if he were present with us. We pray for Christ's help and guidance, and we feel his presence with us.

Upon the mountain Peter and John discovered that prayer changes a person. They thought they knew Jesus, but they there discovered something they had never seen in him before, a beauty and a glory they had not suspected. His face was always lovable, but now it was glorious. It was as full of light and glory as a cloud that has sailed into the setting sun. And the change had come about while he prayed. Prayer had thrust the veil aside and let the glory through.

Can prayer do that for you? Old faces, tired faces, faces of the sick and suffering have been transfigured by prayer. The love, the faith, the earnestness, the deep emotions of their souls have simply illumined their faces and made them radiant. No one can pray constantly without showing the effects of it in face and character and life. Prayer can put a beauty into faces and lives that nothing else can.

Altered Faces

The linnet changes the color of his feathers several times a year. Naturalists used to think that there were several species of linnets, which they called brown, red, and gray, because they used to see the differently colored birds, but now they know that it is the same bird in different plumage.

It is possible so to alter your appearance that you look like a different person. I am not referring to the "dressing up" which all young folks like when they are playing those games in which they want to appear like other people. I refer rather to those changes of countenances which are the outcome of the thoughts of the mind and feelings of the heart. I have seen this occur with boys and girls, and men and women, and the change was so great that it altered their whole appearance. I have seen a nice-looking boy made positively ugly by the bad temper which was shown in his face. He was so altered that he looked as if he were another boy. I have seen a girl, very polite and pleasant before company, but at home, when no strangers were present, sulky and disobedient, and so changed that one could hardly believe that she was the same individual. Remember as you grow older

you will grow either better or worse, and the change will be seen in the expression of your face and in your behavior.—W. S. Herbert Wylie, in Nature Studies.

How Every Christian Should Be Known

More than seventy years ago, when the great missionary, Adoniram Judson, was home on furlough, he passed through Stonington, Connecticut. In those days the Stonington Line was the principal route between New England and New York, and the boys of the town often played about the wharves in the evening in the hope of catching a glimpse of some famous man. Two trains connected with the boat—an accommodation and an express.

One evening, when the accommodation came in, one of the boys noticed a man whose appearance excited his curiosity and wonder. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. Presently it dawned on him that the man was the famous missionary whose picture he had once seen. He ran up the street to the Baptist minister's to ask if it could really be he. The minister hurried back with him. Yes, the boy was right. But the minister, absorbed in conversation with the missionary, forgot all about the boy who had brought him the news. The boy, silent, eager, unable to tear himself away, stood by and watched the wonderful face.

Many years afterward, that boy, Henry Clay Trumbull, became a famous minister himself, and wrote a book of memories in which was a chapter entitled, "What a boy saw in the face of Adoniram Judson." Doctor Trumbull, too, has passed into the presence of the Master whom he served, but the light in the missionary's face still shines down the years. Friends to whom Doctor Trumbull told the story tell it to others, and the printed pages—who can tell to how many lives they have carried their message?

Christians of the shining face—how men and women in doubt, in temptation, in sorrow, search for them; and if they are fortunate enough to find one of them, how they are strengthened and helped!

The shining face is no mystery. Centuries ago the Psalmist knew the secret, and wrote, "They looked to him and were radiant." It comes to those whose faces are always turned toward him, as a flower turns toward the light. It was said at the time of the Boxer rebellion that Chinese Christians could not be disguised—the light in their faces betrayed them. The pity of it, that every Christian may not be known by the shining of his face!—The Youth's Companion.

A Girl to Her Mirror

How shall my face change?
Shall the coming years
Scar it with their troubles,
Blanch it with their tears?
Shall my friends and lovers,
Seeing gray for gold,
Sigh, "Ah, not this face we loved!"
When I am old?

Keeper of the life-years,
Give my face instead
Sweetness for its rose-tints,
Courage for its red,
Love-light for its girl-eyes,
Peace for its hair's gold,
And I shall smile to face the glass
When I am old!—Margaret Widdemer.

Sentence Sermons

Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be;
The mount for vision—but below
The paths of daily duty go.—F. L. Hosmer.

"Beautiful thoughts make a beautiful soul,
And a beautiful soul makes a beautiful face."

If our Lord is going to glow and shine in this world that needs him more than it needs anything else, he must glow and shine through people like you and me.—S. M. Shoemaker.

The face is made every day by its morning prayer, and by its morning look out of windows which open upon heaven.—Joseph Parker.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did the disciples rebuke the parents for bringing children to Jesus? 2. What does verse 15 mean? 3. Why was Jesus indignant? 4. Read what Jesus said about little children in Mt. 18.1-6. 5. How old must a child be in order to be a follower of Jesus? 6. How many children and young people prove themselves Christians in the home?

JESUS AND THE HOME

GOLDEN TEXT: Honor thy father and thy mother (which is the first commandment with promise). Ephesians 6.2

LESSON Mark 10.1-16 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 6.1-9

MARK 10.2 And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? trying him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; 8 and the two shall become one flesh; so that they are no more two, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

13 And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. 16 And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE TEACHING OF JESUS ABOUT DIVORCE, verses 2-9. Pharisees came to Jesus and in an effort, not to obtain instruction but to entangle him, put to him this much-disputed question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" As later in their question about the tribute money, so here they thought that whichever way he answered they would have a case against him. If he said "Yes," he would offend the Jews who believed in the teaching of Rabbi Jochanan, who said, "The putting away of a wife is odious"; if he said "No," he would be opposing the teaching of many rabbis (see Light from Oriental Life) and would offend Herodias (for Herod had put away his own wife and married Herodias), the wife of his brother, while the latter was still living, and her fury might cause him to share the fate of John the Baptist.

As was his frequent custom Jesus referred them to their law: "What did Moses command you?" he questioned. "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away," they replied.

The law of Dt. 24.1 reads that a man may divorce his wife "if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her." The rabbis interpreted this to mean that if a wife displeased her husband in any way (some said that if she spoiled his dinner) he might divorce her. Shammai and Hillel were the two great founders of the Jewish Oral Law. "Rabbi Shammai, 'to his eternal honor,' had said that divorce was permitted only for unfaithfulness; Hillel, 'to his eternal dishonor,' had said that it meant 'all kinds of other reasons as well.' "

"For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment," Jesus returned. The law of Moses was not a perfect law; as some one suggests, it was like the laws of Solon, the great Athenian law-giver, who once said that his laws were not the best that could have been devised, but they were the best the Athenians could receive. The Mosaic law was the best for his time and under the special circumstances in which the Hebrews lived. It must give place to a higher law, for grace and truth come through Jesus Christ.

Passing by the permission of the human lawgiver, Jesus announced that God had ordained one wife for one husband and what he had joined together man should not put asunder. " 'What God hath joined together'—granting that, there would be little hesitance in agreeing with the rest of the sentence. Indeed, we should readily go further and say that 'those whom God hath joined together' not only ought not to be 'put asunder,' but cannot be 'put asunder.' Jesus, however, was not speaking of the ideal marriage, such, for example in modern times, as Charles Kingsley's and Robert Browning's. An Intimate of many lives and Guest in many homes, Jesus knew that the average marriage was far from ideal. In this connection, one recalls his talk with the Samaritan woman at the well. Would he, then, compel husband and wife to live together as such after one of them had violated what is almost universally regarded as the essence of the marriage contract?

"Two distinct questions are involved here. As to the first, it is well to notice that Jesus gave no hint of requirement that an estranged husband and wife should continue to live together. When their relations reached the pitch at which it was not possible to live decently together, he would doubtless require them to live apart. All he said was that, according to a primal law of his Father, neither the injured person nor the guilty was free to contract a new relation. I would call attention to the immense value of the unequivocal attitude of the most ancient church on this question. I do not say that the average marital virtue is higher in the Romish Church than in Protestantism. I merely affirm that the idealism represented in the attitude of the Church of Rome on this question is itself a huge asset. Without casting discredit upon the sincerity of any of those whose conjugal ties have been severed by other than death; flinging no aspersion upon new vows which may have been taken in all integrity, it is for the Christian Church to hold up plainly and unflinchingly the teaching of Jesus—one man for one woman, one woman for one man, 'till death do them part'" (George Clarke Peek).

"You threaten the very life of the Nation when you relax the ties of marriage and weaken the family bond. There is nothing we want more than a new grasp of our Lord's teaching—that there is but one moral law, and that law the same for man and woman. The sacredness of marriage ought to be a subject upon which we have no doubts. On this point it is well not to have an open, but a closed and settled, mind. Let no specious and plausible talk about 'unhappy marriages' unsettle that conviction. The remedy for 'unhappy marriages' is not greater facility for divorce, but increased thought and seriousness in the contraction of marriage. Laxity in this will mean rottenness sweeping in like a flood. It is ours to maintain and assert the more austere and exacting view of Christ. Marriage is an ordinance of God. It is meant for the perfecting of character. It is essentially and ideally permanent and indissoluble" (J. D. Jones).

II. JESUS AND THE CHILDREN, verses 13-16. Very familiar are the pictures representing Jesus surrounded by little children. On one occasion parents brought their children to Jesus as they were wont to bring them to the rabbis in the synagogues, to have him take them in his arms and bless them.

"If we were half as anxious to offer our children to the Lord as we are to educate them well, to place them well, to marry them well, there would be a different story to tell about some of our homes than there is at present; and the world would be a far sweeter and better place than it is. First things first; and the first duty of a parent to his child is this—to offer him to the Lord" (J. D. Jones).

The disciples rebuked the parents. "We are not to understand that the disciples used dignified and polite language. What the Greek word means is that they chided, scolded them, rating them for their forwardness and presumption in intruding themselves upon their Master's notice" (Samuel Cox). Since no devout Jew would have objected to a child's approach to a rabbi, this action on the part of the disciples seems strange. Perhaps Luke's words that they were bringing unto him "even their babes," explains the disciples' attitude; they thought their Master already too thronged by men, women and children without the addition of the babes.

Jesus rebuked the disciples. "Suffer the little children to come unto me," he said; "forbid them not: for to such belongeth the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of Heaven, the reign of God over men, belongs to the childlike believers, those who possess many qualities characteristic of childhood.

"When we recite his words the tone of a great tenderness almost invariably finds its way into our voices. And that is natural. It is nevertheless important for our warning, that we should never forget that when our Lord uttered the words, he was angry. He was moved with indignation that any of his disciples should so misunderstand him as to endeavor to prevent the children from getting to him. There is no doubt that the disciples meant well. It is possible to mean well, and to do ill" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. The double Greek Negative of which "Ye shall in no wise enter therein" is a translation, is very emphatic; it is not a question

of their being greatest in the kingdom, but of their entering the kingdom at all. Jesus is talking about entering the Kingdom, not about growth in the Kingdom, and it is childlikeness, not childishness, which he commends. "Docility, receptivity, open-mindedness, the eager, listening spirit of the little child, open the way to the Kingdom. Better things than childhood has to offer are to be gained through the discipline and stress of life, yet entrance to the Kingdom is attained by no other door than the unspoiled, natural, spontaneous spirit of the child" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

"That, by God's grace, is not only a possibility but a necessity for the human soul. It means turning from worldly wisdom to the heavenly wisdom of faith on which all real knowledge is founded. It means finding in the experience of forgiveness the adult counterpart of childhood's innocence. It means looking at all people and the world itself through the fresh eyes of a new spiritual birth" (Henry van Dyke).

"We wander wide in doubtful ways,
Our eyes of faith are dim;
The child is freshest from God's hand,
And nearest unto him."

And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them. When Mr. Pollard was translating these words into the Miao version of the Bible, his native assistant added the word for "kissed." "But that word is not in the Bible," the translator objected. "But it must be there," the Miao insisted; "Jesus must have kissed the little ones. He couldn't have helped it." And so the word stood.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away, verse 4. The school of Hillel said, "If the wife cook her husband's food ill, by over-salting or over-roasting it, she is to be put away."

"Jewish society was disgraced by an appalling laxity in the matter of divorce. Family life was imperiled by it, and an intolerable wrong was done to womanhood. It made woman the slave of man, putting the wife at the husband's mercy. For while she could not for any cause divorce him, he might for no cause at all divorce her, and cast her upon the world."

For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment, verse 5. The rabbis regarded the liberty of divorce as a special privilege conferred by God upon the chosen people. Rabbi Chananiah said: "God has not subscribed his name to divorces, except among Israelites, as if he said, I have conceded to the Israelites the right of dismissing their wives; but to the Gentiles I have not conceded it." Jesus retorts that it is not the privilege, but the infamy and reproach of Israel, that Moses found it necessary to tolerate divorce. Moses allowed it only for the "Hardness of your hearts," i.e. your unwillingness to accept God's will in the matter of marriage, or, as others explain it, for your brutality toward your wives, which would lead you to maltreat them, unless you had the privilege of divorcing them.—One Volume Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What did Jesus do for Peter's home? For the home of Jairus? For other homes?

Between the Last Lesson and This

Between these two lessons the harmonists place the teaching concerning humility and forgiveness of Mark 9, the discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles of John 7 and 8, the final departure from Galilee, Mk. 10.1, the mission of the seventy, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the visit to Martha and Mary, recorded in Luke 9 and 10; the healing of the man born blind and other events in Jerusalem recorded in chapters 9 and 10 of John; and the discourses in Perea of Luke 11 to 17.

It was toward the close of the Perean Ministry that the question of divorce was put to Jesus. Perhaps Mark and Matthew place this question and the incident of the blessing of little children together because in both instances he is the Defender of the family, in each he maintains the rights of the weak.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them. His words about letting the little ones come to him must have made a deeper impression upon the disciples than they would had he not by this act shown his great love for little children. Whenever afterwards they saw a child in his parent's arms they must have been reminded of this scene and these words of their Great Teacher. All teachers know that object lessons are impressive for young children, but all do not realize how great is their force for the adult mind. After the coming of the great fleet of war vessels into the New York harbor there was a rush of applications for enlistment. No amount of printed information about our Navy and its call for volunteers had such a result. You can recall countless similar illustrations of the fact that object lessons are impressive for all ages.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE DIVORCE EVIL

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The Enemy of the Home

Divorce is an evil symptom the causes for which ramify far and wide. The United States now leads the world in this infamy, having outdistanced her principal competitor, Japan, in the past two years. Comment is needless, except that when one remembers the hapless children who innocently suffer, such comment is intensified. Otherwise, the evil speaks for and condemns itself.

And this is the unanswerable condemnation; divorce strikes at the heart of the home. Should it ever strike to kill, which I for one refuse to believe, it will paralyze the State, and precipitate its ruin. No wonder that Christian clergymen and Jewish rabbis mourn over the betrayal of our domestic standards by reckless or profligate runagates! No wonder they protest against the species of foul dramatic or pictorial representation which encourages instinctive passion, and incites the gratification of lawless impulses. Whether they are heeded or scorned, these men are God's prophets. They know history; they have studied its lessons; they are acquainted with its inevitable results. Hence, their brave remonstrance against all attempts to usurp the reign and discipline of a lofty and inviolable domestic life in our nation.—S. Parks Cadman.

Incompatibility

"It is the lack of the art of adjustment in marriage that fills the divorce courts. Probably love, in its essence, is the most aggressive assertion of egotism that can be found. Yet no doubt most people start their married life with the sincere desire to make some one else happy. The trouble comes in the little adjustments, not in the big. Our life is a tissue of petty, trivial daily habits, so slight and so instinctive in themselves that we are not conscious of them till they are interfered with, yet so immensely binding that any permanent interference with them disconcerts us more than disasters of far greater importance. There are habits of eating, habits of exercise, habits of cleanliness, habits of regular hours for regular actions. When two different groups of habits are thrown together in intimate contact, the shock is all the more astonishing from the insignificance of the details.

"This difficulty of small ajustments breaks more marriages than the larger evils or the larger sins. It is called incompatibility, but a little patience would overcome it.

"We cannot begin too early to learn the art of adjustment. Only by making ourselves adaptable, comfortable, agreeable to others can we dispose others to afford us comfort, solace and satisfaction."

For Better, for Worse

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton tells a story in The Atlantic about a man in the north of England whose wife, soon after her marriage, fell into vicious ways, and went from bad to worse. "One evening he came home to find, as he had often found before, that she had gone on a new debauch. He knew only too well in what plight she would return after two or three days of a nameless life. In an empty and cheerless home he sat down to look the fact in the face, the better to learn what he must do. The worst had happened too many times to leave him any hope, and he saw what lay before him. The words of the marriage rite, 'for better, for

worse,' had now a terrible meaning; but he reaffirmed his vow on his knees. When a friend who knew the facts ventured to commiserate him, he answered, 'Not a word!' His wife did not mend her ways, but died in his house some years later, a poor wreck, sunken in shame, with his hands spread over her in pity and prayer."

"The story is a terrible one," S. C. Hughson comments, "but who would not say that human nature had been ennobled, all human life made less sordid and selfish, the character of the race strengthened, spiritualized, and lifted up to a high plane, by the splendid achievement which the enduring love of this one man wrought amidst his patient years of anguish?"

An Effective Way for Combating the Growing Divorce Evil

Never yet have I known a preacher in any church to read the marriage vows from the pulpit and take them for a text with which to search the conscience of dilatory wives and delinquent husbands, and maybe restore love and loyalty in the homes of his people. I have wondered about this, especially during recent years.

Why should a church be so particular about reminding you of your membership pledge to behave yourself, love, honor and support the Church, and leave you for forty wearing, tearing years without reminding you of the vows you took when you were married? They are more important and far more binding before the Lord. For you can be a divorced woman and still be a prominent member of your church. You can be divorced three times, for that matter, and still sing in the choir. And you can be the very fiend of a husband and still be a steward in the church with a good collection-taking countenance.

I do not say that you will be damned, my brother, for this meanness tacitly encouraged by your Church; but I do say that the Lord will lather you and chasten you somewhere, somehow, no matter how liberal you are or how pious you look stepping down the aisles of your church on Sunday with your collection tambourine filled with fluttering bills, if you are charged in your last accounts with debts of love and honor and faithfulness to your wife that you did not pay. And if there are any drudges kept in heaven, I doubt not they will be selected sternly from that class of women who had such good taste for expensive things that they bankrupted their husbands in this present world.

What I mean is this: With the motion picture showing how ephemeral marriage is, and comedies making the relation ridiculous, and the best plays dramatizing three-cornered love affairs, with one corner unlawful, and the courts granting divorces at the rate of twenty-five an hour when they start a day's grinding up of marriage vows, it does seem that preachers should say more than they do from the pulpit about the sanctity and glory and permanence of marriage.

I think one trouble is that whether we marry for love or not, we expect happiness. I do not know why we do, because it is not promised in the Scriptures; only peace, at a great price. In life it comes to us and goes away. We have no power to will it or to keep it. Even the Constitution of the freest country in the world does not guarantee it; only the pursuit of happiness, because, I suppose, the eminent psychologists who wrote the thing knew that we would pursue it anyhow. And I remember, like any other lover, Lundy promised the same thing—we would be married and live happily ever after. And we did; but it was a happiness strangely like sorrow; sometimes like the high, keen anguish in the noblest lines of a triumphant hymn.—Corra Harris, in My Book and Heart.

A Happy Marriage Must Be Earned

A young woman came to consult a Christian physician, as told in a story in The Youth's Companion. After talking for a while, the doctor astonished her by saying, "The real trouble with you is that you want to be happy and are not."

She gasped with astonishment, "How did you know?"

"It's what everybody wants, whether he knows it or not. We want it because it is something God meant us to have; until we are at least beginning to reach the things that God means for us we are always miserable. You are in trouble because happiness is never a gift; it always has to be earned. And you have not earned it."

"Why, doctor," she protested, "you can't earn a happy marriage."

The doctor dropped his clenched hand on his desk. "That's exactly what you have to do, you and every man and woman who tries for happiness through marriage. Some one's falling in love with you is just the seed of happiness. Life puts thousands of such seeds—opportunties—into our lives. Having done that she's done her part. She leaves us to take care of them."

"But I never do wrong things," the woman protested. "I don't see why—"

"Do you ever do right ones?" he asked, and the room seemed to ring with the question.

"I don't understand," she said falteringly.

"Happiness has to be earned; that's the eternal law. Happiness has to be earned by unselfishness, by good, honest work and by active loving. Expecting to be happy because you don't do wrong things is like expecting to get a potato crop merely because you've bought the seed. The seed has to be planted, and the vines have to be cultivated and the field weeded before your harvest comes. That's the treatment. But you've got to give it to yourself."

O Happy Home

O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest,
Thou loving Friend, and Saviour of our race,
And where among the guests there never cometh
One who can hold such high and honored place.

O happy home, where each one serves Thee, lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee.

O happy home, where Thou art not forgotten
When joy is overflowing, full, and free;
O happy home, where every wounded spirit
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to Thee.

O happy home, whose little ones are given
Early to Thee in humble faith and prayer,
To Thee, their Friend, who from the heights of heaven
Guides them, and guards with more than mother's care.

—Carl Spitta.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Any woman can bear children, keep a clean house and behave virtuously; but it takes courage, fortitude and great heart to be a good wife.—Corra Harris.

2. The divorce evil. We shall not get rid of this blot that breaks up our families by mere changes in laws—by new marriage laws, divorce laws, whether federal laws or state laws. We must go deeper than that. The Church has a duty in this matter; to bring home to its congregations the truth that happiness is not the end of life, and no life is worth living that has not in it service and self-sacrifice.—Lyman Abbott. See Marriage Temporary or Permanent? in The Atlantic, Sept. 1926.

3. The home is the Christian's greatest battlefield—Malcolm McLeod. See The Christian Life and the Modern Family, a chapter in Francis Greenwood Peabody's book, The Christian Life in the Modern World; Chapters XII and XVI of The Revival of Wonder, by Malcolm J. McLeod.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. When a jailor asked Paul a question similar to that of the young man in our lesson, what was Paul's answer? 2. Explain the meaning of Jesus' question in 10.18. 3. Explain the meaning of 10.24 and 25. 4. Are there more people who are discontented with what they have, or who are discontented with what they are? 5. Can the desire for riches be as great a stumbling-block to a poor man as the possession of riches to a rich man? 6. Is money in itself evil? 7. What qualities has one to whom wealth is a blessing? 8. What qualities has one to whom wealth is a curse? 9. What is the Christian view of possessions?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

BEING A CHRISTIAN AT HOME

Beginning the Lesson

"It happened one day that the Angel-who-attends-to-things was hastening along the street, with his wings tucked in and his robes tucked up, for he was in a hurry, when a duke looked out of his castle window and called to him.

" 'Stop a moment, please,' said the Duke. 'I wish to consult you about the succession of my dukedom. You know my grandfather, the Archduke—

"'I cannot attend to you this morning!' said the Angel. 'I am engaged on business of importance; your affair must wait till another time.' And he passed on.

"'Dear me!' said the Duke. 'What can be more important than the succession? I really must follow him and see what this great matter is.' So he followed the Angel."

As the Angel hurried on, in this charming fable by Laura E. Richards, told in The Golden Windows, a Bishop tried to stop him to attend to a matter in which he was interested, but the Angel could not "attend to trifles this morning." And he followed the Angel. Next the King called to him, but the Angel put him off with "By and by." And he followed the Angel and the Duke and the Bishop to learn what this business of the Angel's could be which was more important than the affairs of the kingdom.

"The Angel turned from the wide street, and passed down a narrow lane, and into a dingy court, where poor clothes hung drying. In the middle of the court stood a little child, with its eyes tight shut and its mouth wide open, crying and roaring as if its heart would break. The Angel ran to the child, and knelt down and took it in his arms.

"'Hush! hush!" he cried. 'It is all right, dear. You took the wrong turning, that was all. She is just around the corner. Quick, let me wipe the tears away! Look! There she comes.'"

A woman came flying around the corner, wild-eyed and panting. The Angel put the child into her arms, and the two sobbed and laughed themselves away out of sight.

"The Angel drew a long breath, and rustled his wings a little, and turned to go back: and as he turned he saw the Duke and the Bishop and the King, all out of breath and crimson, and staring with big round eyes.

"'Oh! are you there?' said the Angel. 'Well, now I can attend to your little matters.'"

The disciples thought they knew who were the important ones to whom Jesus should attend. The men and the women with their troubles and cares. But Jesus was ready to put aside a duke or a bishop or a king in order to take little children up in his arms and bless them. Tell the story in Mark's words.

One time in answer to a question of the disciples as to who was greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, Jesus called a little child to him and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." What did Jesus mean by these words? And then he continued: "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea." By "causing one to stumble," Jesus meant causing one to do wrong, to sin. Don't you think he loved children?

Suffer Little Children to Come unto Me

It is said that Dannecker, the German sculptor, when he had labored two years on his great statue of Christ, thought his work finished. As a test he called into his studio a little girl and pointing to the statue asked her, "Who is that?" She replied, "A great man." The artist turned away and exclaimed, "My work is a failure; my eye has been deceived." He began the work anew and when he had spent several years more upon it he again called a little child to see it. After looking in silence for a time at the statue, the child's curiosity deepened into awe, and bursting into tears it said in low and gentle tones, "Suffer little children to come unto me." The child had divined his meaning, and had appreciated his Christ.—David Gregg.

To Such Belongeth the Kingdom of God

A great king built a beautiful city and invited everybody to come into it. Many sought to enter, but there was only one gate and that was low and narrow. One man came with a load of money, but could not get through the gate with it. A farmer came and wanted to take in some of his best stock. He could not get them in. A woman came very stylishly dressed, who evidently wanted people to admire her. Another was loaded with selfishness and another was swollen with anger. All these people were told that they could not take these things into the beautiful city. Some were angry and went away loving what they had more than

before. Some said the city was not worth going into and turned into the wide gate. But others were wiser. They saw that children who tried to go in always succeeded. These children were humble and did not have so much of the world with them. So these wiser people cast away their hindrances and got down, humble, like the children, and so got through the gate.

This beautiful city is the Kingdom of God. When old or young seek it they must be humble and trusting, like the children. They must leave all their sins and vanities behind; and then there will be no difficulty in getting through the gate. —Wm. Armstrong, in Sermons to Children.

A Christian at Home

Some years ago, as I sat on the piazza of a summer hotel, I noticed among the crowd a party of young people, two or three pretty girls, and as many bright young men, all "waiting for the mail."

"Oh, dear!" said the prettiest of the girls, impatiently, "why don't they hurry? Are you expecting a letter, Mr. Allison?" and she turned to a tall youth standing near.

He smiled. "I'll get one, surely," he said. "It's my day. Just this particular letter always comes. Nell is awfully good: she's my sister, you know, and no fellow ever had a better one."

The pretty girl laughed, saying, as he received his letter, "Harry would think he was blessed if I wrote once a year."

Gradually the others drifted away, but Frank Allison kept his place, scanning eagerly the closely written sheets, now and again laughing quietly. Finally he slipped the letter into his pocket, and rising, saw me.

"Good news?" I questioned, smiling.

"My sister's letters always bring good news," he answered. "She writes such jolly letters." And, unfolding this one, he read me scraps of it—bright nothings, with here and there a little sentence full of sisterly love and earnestness. There was a steady light in his eyes, as, half apologizing for "boring" me, he looked up and said, quietly, "Miss Williams, if I ever make anything of a man, it will be Sister Nell's doing."

And as I looked at him I felt strongly what a mighty power "Sister Nell" held in her hands. It made me wonder how many girls stop to consider how they are using their influence over these boys, growing so fast toward manhood, unworthy or noble, as the sisters choose.

There is but one way, girls—begin at once, while they are still the little boys of the home circle, ready to come to "sister" with anything. Let them feel that you love them. These great, honest boy hearts are both tender and loyal, and if you stand by these lads now, while they are neither boys nor men, while they are awkward and heedless, they will remember it when they become the courteous, polished gentlemen you desire to see them. Do not snub them. Nothing hurts a loving boy soul more than a snub, and nothing more effectually closes the boy heart than thoughtless ridicule.—The Classmate.

Sentence Sermons

God hides himself within the love
Of those whom we love best;
The smiles and tones that make our homes
Are shrines by him possessed.—W. C. Gannett.

"If you are a child of God, your life in the home will reveal it."

Among God's purposes in placing men and women in families are the opportunities to be chivalric and tender and strong that wait at the humble home hearth, which are found nowhere else in the world.—The Youth's Companion.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Describe Hofmann's picture of Christ and the Rich Young Man. 2. What do we know about the rich young man from Mt. 19.22 and Lk. 18.18? 3. Where in the Bible are the Commandments given? 4. What is the number of each of the commandments given in 10.19? 5. In Mt. 23.24 Jesus uses another figure of speech which, like 10.25, is an exaggerated figure; what is it? 6. What hero of The Acts sold his possession and gave all the proceeds to the poor? (Acts 2.45.) 7. Tell the parable of the man who trusted in his riches, Lk. 12.16-21. 8. What does Eccles. 5.13 say about riches? 9. What did Paul say in Acts 20.35 that Jesus said about giving?

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

GOLDEN TEXT: Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. Matthew 6.21

LESSON Mark 10.17-27; 12.41-44

MARK 10.17 And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, *even* God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother. 20 And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth. 21 And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 22 But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved? 27 Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-5

MARK 12.41 And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: 44 for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE GREAT REFUSAL, 10.17-22. "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" was the question which a young aristocrat put to Jesus one day, as he ran and kneeled down before him. He realized that he had missed the *summum bonum,* the greatest good, of life, and he believed that there were certain good things (Mt. 19.16) which he could do to win it.

"Why callest thou me good?" Jesus questioned in his turn, adding, "None is good save one, even God." This question seems a challenge to the young man who had used the word *good* with as little thought as we do when we say "Good morning." Jesus would have him weigh his words and see whether he meant what he said. The young man was a close student of the Law; he came to Jesus as a peripatetic pupil seeking the latest knowledge. The maxim of the rabbis, "There is nothing good but the Law"—held full sway over his mind. Jesus had to fling him out of that groove and suggest a goodness higher than the goodness of the Law—namely, God's goodness. Thou callest me good—you are judging from the point of view of the Law—you are saying what you would say to any rabbi. I am not good in that sense. I am good in a better sense. There is none good but God; the goodness I have is God's goodness. That is what you have to learn. To learn it, become my disciple.

The young man's question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life," Jesus then answered by saying: "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud (a special application of the tenth commandment), Honor thy father and mother" —naming the commandments which test one's love of one's neighbor. And the young man answered, "Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth." " 'Surely,' he seems to think, 'the great Teacher to whom I have come seeking for some great thing to do, or secret thing to know, cannot possibly give as his answer that I am to keep these old, simple, elementary ten commandments, which I learned to lisp on my mother's knee—surely he must mean something far beyond that!' It was exactly like the child in the great poem, who having been talked to continually about the glory and the majesty of the sea, and being led to the seaside said, 'Is that the mighty ocean? Is that all!' " (F. W. Farrar).

"The lesson is that the social duty to which Christ would immediately and supremely direct us is not to be looked for in the distance. It is close at

hand. It confronts us in the circumstances of our daily lives" (George Hodges).

Jesus looking upon the young man loved him. "One thing thou lackest," Jesus said. His penetrating glance showed him the man's dissatisfaction with himself, his soul-discontent, his earnestness in seeking moral heights to which he knew he had not attained, and to which he knew not the way.

"The diagnosis of Jesus was unerring. Two things were wrong in this young man. The commands he had kept were chiefly negative. They were summed up in the rabbinical saying: 'Thou shalt not do to others what thou wouldest not have others do to thee.' Our Lord changed the negative path of duty into the positive all along the line. He applied his great principle to this young man's case. 'Give yourself to others,' he said, 'contribute to others' good.'

"But there was another fatal weakness in this delightful and admirable person. 'He clung to his wealth in a way quite incompatible with any just estimation of the higher good. There was hidden in that love of riches a luxurious self-love and a lack of sympathy with the wants of men that made it endanger the very roots of character.' He was accustomed to a cushioned life. He was being made a prisoner by the fetters of ease. If he went on a few years longer, he would be a prisoner for life. He must find a way of escape" (R. C. Gillie).

"Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." This was not a universal command of Jesus; it was not spoken to all the rich in general, but only to this rich man in particular. To part with his possessions was a necessary thing for this man; in another man the one thing necessary might be something very different. Mary and Martha and Lazarus were rich, but Jesus never gave them this counsel. Jesus never condemned riches in themselves; he condemned the devotion to riches which makes one lose his sense of the value of better things.

The one thing we lack may be the carrying on of our business in accordance with Christian principles; it may be the engaging in genuine prayer; it may be the rendering of some service; whatever it is, each one himself best knows.

"And thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me," was the conclusion of Christ's appeal.

But the young man's countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions. Riches were to this young man an idol; he thought to serve both God and Mammon. One would like to believe the tradition that the young ruler's satisfaction in his possessions left him after he returned home, that he could not forget his talk with the Good Teacher, and that he finally obeyed Christ's command and followed him. But it is only a tradition. As the record tells us, he refused the call to heroism. It is useless to dwell on what he might have been—"a second St. John, or another Timothy."

"The world of nature knows two kinds of forces—the gravitant forces, such as gravitation, and the radiant forces, such as electricity and radium. The man who belongs to the Kingdom of God holds the gravitant forces of his life, its acquisitive and accumulative powers, under the domination of the radiant forces of love and service" (Halford E. Luccock).

II. THE PERIL OF POSSESSIONS, 10.23-27. Jesus looked around upon his disciples and read their thoughts. Were they thinking that their Master had needlessly thrown away a fine opportunity of winning a very rich man to their cause? "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" he exclaimed. He recognized how difficult it was for the young man to make the right decision. He knew the fettering power of great wealth. "Jesus saw that the more a man has of things that are seen, the less likely he is to realize his need of the unseen things" (Ainsworth).

The disciples gazed upon Jesus in amazement, and Jesus repeated his words, slightly changing them: "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!" It is not in the amount of riches which a man has that the danger lies, but in trusting to them, in being possessed by them.

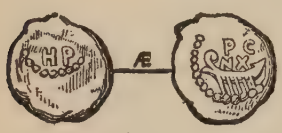
"How hard it is for those who have riches not to trust in them! All unconsciously the sense of security wraps them round. They scarcely ever face a situation in which they would be utterly helpless without God. The more sure they are of drawing their dividends, the less do they feel the need of drawing on the divine resources" (H. T. Hodgkin).

"It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Compare the figure of speech in Mt. 23.24, where Jesus calls the Pharisees "blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" Both are exaggerated proverbs. Exaggerated speech has always been common among oriental people, and the exaggeration of the common proverb which Jesus uses here to express immense difficulty caused his hearers no trouble of interpretation, though it has caused much trouble to modern readers. Many commentators adopt the interpretation that "the eye of the needle" is the name for the small gate within the large gate, through which it was possible, when the large gate was closed at night, for a camel to pass after being unloaded.

Overcome with astonishment, the disciples asked, "Then who can be saved?" "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God." As an answer to the disciples' question, his words mean that man cannot save himself, salvation is of God. But the word *it* may refer to the conquering of the peril of riches. It is interesting to note that the Greek preposition translated *with,* with the noun in the dative, means *beside, alongside of;* hence the meaning here is not merely that God can do everything, but that all things are possible to man alongside of, with, God.

"It needs the tidal power of the divine influence to free men from their earthly entanglements and lift them to the heroism Christ demands."

III. THE WIDOW'S MITES, 12.41-44. On Tuesday of Holy Week Jesus was sitting "over against the treasury" in the Court of the Women of the temple, noting how the people gave their money, and how much many rich people gave. Then he saw a poor widow approach and throw into the money-chest two mites, which make a farthing. The Greek word *leptra,* plural of *leptron,* here translated *mites,* means the smallest Greek coins in circulation. A farthing is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "a little fourth of a penny." Its value was about four-fifths of a cent, or about one-twentieth of a laborer's wage for a day. The rabbis forbade the offering of a single leptron.



A Mite

Calling his disciples, Jesus said to them: "This poor widow cast in more than all them that are casting in the treasury; for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." "The others cast away, she only gave" (Richard Crashaw). It is the amount which one has left, not the amount which one gives, which determines one's generosity.

"If we have regard to the origin of the expression, it argues more of presumption than of humility to call any gift, however liberal, unless it were our all, a mite; while the frequent use of the term to excuse some shabby offering which costs the donor nothing is a remarkable expression of the serene unconsciousness with which persons will sometimes pass the most bitter sarcasms upon themselves" (Davies).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

There ran one to him, 10.17. No common reason will ever lead the oriental to break his slow, sedate, and dignified walk.—Ewing.

All these things have I observed from my youth, 10.20. Dean Farrar tells us that when Rabbi Chamina lay dying, he said to the angel of death: "Go and fetch me the Book of the Law, and see whether there is anything in it which I have not kept." The Talmud represents God as speaking of "my sanctified ones, who have kept the whole Law from Aleph to Taw."

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! 10.23. The Jews inclined to think it much easier for a rich man than for a poor man. The former had in his very prosperity a proof of the divine favor; he was *prima facie* a good man, and might feel very hopeful about entering the Kingdom.—John A. Broadus, in Commentary on Matthew.

It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, 10.25. There is a rabbinical proverb which speaks of "a camel dancing in a quart-measure," and in the Koran it says that one "who accuses our doctrine of falsity shall find the gates of heaven

shut, nor shall he enter into paradise till a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle." The Greeks said, "It is easier to hide five elephants under one's arm," and the Latins, "More easily would a locust bring forth an elephant." Sir H. M. Elliot in The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians shows that the phrase was universal in the East to express difficulty, and quotes a record that in a juggler's performances "larger bodies were made to issue out of small ones; an elephant was drawn through a window, and a camel through the eye of a needle."

Behold how the multitude cast money into the treasury, 12.41. These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence their name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them. Nine were for the receipt of what was legally due by worshipers; the other four were for strictly voluntary gifts. In all probability this space where the thirteen trumpets were placed was the "treasury."—George Adam Smith.

They all did cast in of their superfluity, 12.44. Such was the tendency to cast in much that a law had to be enacted forbidding the gift to the temple of more than a certain proportion of one's possessions. And the amount of such contributions may be inferred by recalling the circumstance that, at the time of Pompey and Crassus, the temple treasury, after having lavishly defrayed every possible expenditure, contained in money nearly half a million, and precious vessels to the value of two million sterling.—Alfred Edersheim, in The Temple and Its Service.

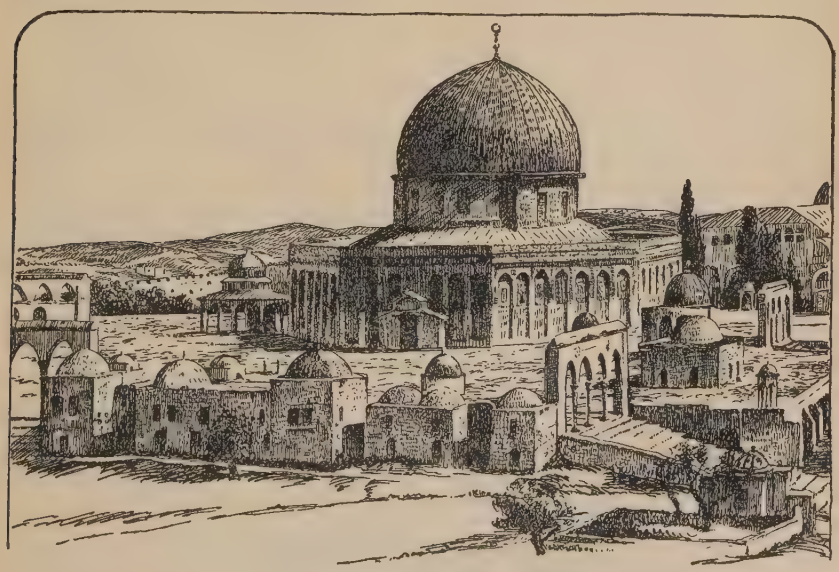
THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What did Jesus say near Cæsarea Philippi about losing and gaining life? About gaining the world?

On the Way to Jerusalem through Perea

All three Synoptists record the coming of the rich young ruler to Jesus immediately after the blessing of the little children, as Jesus "was going forth into the way" toward Jerusalem. The incident at the treasury in the temple occurred on the Tuesday before the Crucifixion.



The Temple Area Today

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Some one speaks about the transformation that would be wrought in this world if stewardship and system should take the place of stinginess and spasm in the

Christian's use of his income. Pupils in the Church School should be educated to stewardship and system, to regular and systematic giving, to generous and self-sacrificing giving.

The ideal way of financing a Church School is for the church to include in its budget all regular expenses of the school, leaving the contributions of the school for missionary and other benevolent uses. And the pupils in the school should know how their money is spent, and should be made interested in the various causes to which they contribute.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PERIL OF RICHES

Beginning the Lesson

Ribera was a poor, struggling Spanish artist when a rich man discovered his genius and offered him a place in his palace. There Ribera had every luxury. While friendless and almost starving he had devoted himself untiringly to his art, but when surrounded by all that wealth could buy his zeal flagged, the new life of pleasure took much of his time, and weakened his artistic vision and skill. When he came to himself and realized that his genius was suffering an eclipse, he resolved upon a courageous step. He gave up the palace and tried again to support himself. Often the temptation came to return to his life of ease, for he was so poor that he had to sell his coat for food, but he resisted it, and persevered in his purpose. At last success crowned his efforts and made him famous.

For his art's sake the one thing needful for Ribera was the giving up of all he possessed through his patron, and he was great enough to make the great renunciation.

For his soul's sake the one thing needful for the rich young ruler was the giving up of his possessions, and this he was not great enough to do.

The Peril of the Lesser Good

The ordinary reader of the Gospel, it may be suspected, would underwrite this incident of the rich young ruler with the subtitle, "A Hard Test." Dante, with keener insight, calls it "The Great Refusal." For it is exactly the common inability to see that the failure to meet the hard test is a great refusal of life, that makes life's tragedy. We see the hardness of the test; Jesus and Dante see the greatness of the life refused.

The story is a perpetual parable of human struggle; for life's supreme test and challenge are never—as men so commonly think—Can you withstand the evil? but rather, Can you rise superior to the lower goods? The constant struggle is between aspiration, on the one hand, and one's already "great possessions," on the other. Everywhere life brings the challenge of the call to denial of the lower; the soul responds either with the great commitment or the great refusal.

Suppose the young man had met Christ's challenge and followed him positively, to play such a part as Paul played? Suppose he had been clear-sighted and strong-souled enough to enter into his supreme opportunity? Who would have pitied him? Would he have needed any one's pity? Would he not rather have had deep admiration and the envy of all high souls, and have become one of the great life-giving forces of the world? Something like that he had before him. Something like that Jesus offered him that day in the guise of his severe test. In soberest reason, were his great possessions worth the price he paid?

Life's constant question is, Are you equal to the call? Can you rise to it? Can you meet the challenge of your best possibility? Or must you be "let-off"? We have great aspirations and occasional visions; have we the determination to follow them to the end, or, with fallen countenance and sorrowful spirit, must we go away from the uplands of life, enchained by our great possessions?—Condensed from Religion as Life, by Henry Churchill King.

So Big

Three or four years ago you were reading Edna Ferber's gripping story of a brave, aspiring mother whose one aim in life was to bring up her son to be great-souled, to aspire and to achieve. Left a widow with twenty-five acres of poor land on which to support herself and child, she accomplished the seemingly impossible task. "How big is baby?" she used to ask the lovable little chap and he would stretch his arms wide and answer, "So-o-o-o-o-o Big." Often they would play this game, until the nickname "So big" clung to him.

She sent him through Chicago University, then for a course in architecture at Cornell, and at last he was ready to accomplish something himself. He entered a Chicago firm of architects, and she dreamed of the wonderful buildings that his brain would call into being. Then a girl with whom he had fallen in love turned him down to marry a man of wealth. But she still loved him and soon hated her rich husband. She set out to corrupt him. In this she did not succeed, but she did make him dissatisfied with the slow returns he was getting in his profession and induced him to become a bond salesman. Through her wealthy connections she secretly turned clients his way. The amassing of money occupied all his thoughts.

One evening his mother called him "So big."

"You haven't called me that in years," he said, laughing.

"How big is my son?" she was smiling, but her eyes were somber.

"So big," answered the young man, and measured a very tiny space between thumb and forefinger.

"Dirk, are you ever going back to architecture? It is now or never with you. Pretty soon it will be too late. Are you ever going back to architecture? To your profession?"

"No, mother."

She gave a gasp, as though icy water had been thrown full in her face. She looked suddenly old, tired. Her shoulders sagged. He stood in the doorway, braced for her reproaches, but when she spoke it was to reproach herself.

"Then I'm a failure."

He was not a bad young man, but he was untrue to his first self. The son of such a mother should have been one of the truly great ones of the earth. For great possessions he made his great refusal.

The Good and the Evil of Riches

Certain virtues are rather helped than hurt by the possession of wealth; at least, such is the case among a certain number of wealthy. Those who are of the wealthy leisure class have the time for the development of thoughtfulness, consideration, refinement, courtesy—virtues which to those in the rush of active life, or under the pressure of the struggle to exist, are indeed not unknown or impossible, but are often literally crowded out. This applies to some extent to spiritual gifts. Persons absorbed in a ceaseless struggle for daily bread for themselves or their families often gain certain noble virtues rarely found among the rich, but they often also do not have time to acquaint themselves with or to develop some other spiritual attainments for which leisure at least gives more opportunity. Certain wealthy persons spend a large portion of their lives in acts of charity or in philanthropic deeds, made possible to them by the possession of wealth. Shall we say that such action has no good effect? A larger number of wealthy persons devote themselves to the unselfish pursuit of higher education; from this privilege those born poor are by no means debarred, provided they have ability and capacity. In many instances, however, such a course is made possible only by the possession of wealth. Can we say that noble pursuits have no effect in ennobling life?

The ill effects of wealth upon character are probably, however, more marked. There is in particular one evil, in most cases the fruitful parent of many other ills so common among the wealthy that it appears the almost inevitable concomitant of wealth. This is the development of self-indulgence and selfish luxury. Many live simply, however, even penuriously, because of greed; so overpowered are they by the passion for money that they are unwilling to spend much upon themselves. If such people are excepted, the wealthy who live simply and do not surround themselves with luxury are comparatively few in number. Selfish luxury is undoubtedly the prevailing sin of wealth, and from it often spring effeminacy, a pampered appetite, not seldom fast living and sensuality.

Another ill effect of wealth is the temptation to exalt the value of material possessions over character, and to a less extent over intellectual and spiritual attainments. Wealth procures for its possessor so many opportunities, enjoyments, privileges, often so much power, including the power to do good, but even more truly the power to manipulate other fortunes and acquire more wealth, that the large majority of the wealthy are at least tempted, if not induced, to consider the possession of riches the most important thing in life, the ruling consideration in matters of business, of marriage, of social friendship, too often the chief standard in the valuation of men.—Condensed from Studies in Social Christianity, by Josiah Strong.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The danger of the rich young ruler is the greatest danger that besets our own people today, nationally and individually.—Henry Churchill King.

2. The Christian and his possessions. See Chapter IV of Jesus Christ and the Social Question, by Francis Greenwood Peabody; pages 273-284 of The Life of Christ, by W. J. Dawson.

3. Nearness to the Kingdom. See Chapter II of The Bane and the Antidote, by W. L. Watkinson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Matthew says that the mother of James and John made the request of verse 37: how do you reconcile this with Mark's statement that the sons themselves made the request? 2. Is it ever right to wish for pre-eminence? 3. What is the meaning of the figurative expression, "to drink the cup"? 4. What is the meaning of the words that the place of honor in the Kingdom of God are "for them for whom it hath been prepared"? 5. Why were the Ten indignant?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE SUPREME CHOICE

Beginning the Lesson

Do you recall how, in Longfellow's beautiful story of Evangeline, after many years of wandering, one moonlight night Gabriel in one boat and Evangeline in another came so near that their outstretched hands might have clasped had they but known it? Each was longing to find the other, but the great opportunity passed without their realizing that it had come. This is the saddest part of the whole story.

Today we see Jesus and a rich young man seeking each other. The young man missed his opportunity, not because he did not know it, but because he would not take it. How did the opportunity come? How did he miss it?

Why Is It Hard for Some Rich Men to Enter the Kingdom?

"It is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Jesus said.

I am sure Jesus did not mean that a rich man cannot be a child of God and live in God's Kingdom; but only that it is very, very hard for a rich man to get in. Why do you think it is so hard? Certainly, God loves a rich man as well as a poor man. God does not love anybody because he is poor, or wears mean clothes, or lives in a little, shabby house. God loves us just for ourselves, not for what we have or for what we lack. God surely wants the rich man to come in. Then why is it so hard?

Let me tell you a story which I have heard. I think it will help you to understand. A child was playing one day with a beautiful vase which the mother had left on the table for a moment. When the mother looked, his hand was in the vase and he complained that he could not get it out. She tried to help him, and pulled and pulled, but the little hand could not get out. Mother called the father to come, and he tried. But the hand stuck fast in the vase. How should they get it out? Of course they must get it out somehow!

The father thought of breaking the vase. But it was so valuable that he did not want to do that. Yet he knew he must if the hand could get out in no other way. So he said to the boy, "Now, my son, make one more try. Open your hand and stretch your fingers out straight, as you see me doing, and then pull!" But the little fellow said, "Oh, no, papa! I couldn't put my fingers out straight like that, for if I did I would lose my penny!" He had a penny in his hand all the time, and he was holding it fast in his tight little fist! And he didn't open his hand because he wanted to keep the penny! No wonder his hand wouldn't come out! Of course it wouldn't! But when once he opened his fingers and dropped the penny, out came the hand easily enough.

The entrance into God's Kingdom is narrow, like the neck of a vase. It is quite easy to pass in, but one must first open his hand to God. That is, he must give everything he has to God; he can keep nothing back for his own. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me daily." Jesus gave up all he had for us, and we must give all we have to him.

But we like to keep our fists closed, to hold fast in our own hands what we have,

to use it for ourselves. And when a man is rich, the danger is that he will love his money so much that he will not give it up at the door of the Kingdom. So he stays out, not because God keeps him out, but because he clings to his money. He keeps saying, "This is mine! I will not give it to God!" The boy said, "I can't draw my hand out of the vase!" But we know it was because he would not. He could if he would. It was his own clenched fist, that little hand clutching the penny, that made him a prisoner.—Frank T. Bayley, in Little Ten-Minutes.

The Truth About Money

Money is good because of the things it will buy. It is right to be industrious and earn money, but it is wrong to be so greedy for money that one has no time nor thought for what God wants one to do. It is right to spend money for one's necessities and pleasures, but it is wrong to spend all one's money upon one's self. He who trusts God will do what he is sure God wants him to do, and will not worry about not having enough money. Money should be one's servant, never one's master.

The Thrill of Giving Is Denied the Rich Man

Mr. Schwab, the President and chief owner of the great Bethlehem Steel Company, has given away millions of dollars. Yet when some one spoke to him about the pleasure of giving, he said:

"The pleasure of giving? Why, the man with too much money can't really give. He can sign his name to a check, and a certain amount of money will automatically pass from his possession. But what he has given means nothing to him. He does not need it. He has sacrificed nothing. He couldn't use it if he had kept it. So where does the thrill come in?"

And then Mr. Schwab continued to talk about what great wealth could not do. "There is no enjoyment in great wealth," he asserted. "One of the greatest happinesses in life is in having something to look forward to—something just out of reach—something that you are not quite able to afford.

"When a man reaches the place where he can get any of the world's purchasable things simply by writing a check, he has cut loose from happiness, unless he is fortunate enough to have powerful interests of a constructive sort quite apart from his money. Of course young people will not believe this. They think they would be deliriously happy if they could become millionaires. Millionaires! Nonsense! How long will it take them to learn that the things worth while in life are things on which the dollar mark is never stamped, things for which money has no buying power?"

The Widow's Choice

What strikes one about this widow is the narrowness of her opportunity. How could she be generous, having nothing to be generous with! Yet out of that hopeless situation she won her triumph. That gift is the only thing we know about her, yet it has sufficed to make her well known. A noble and valiant spirit shines through the humble gift. That the loftiest virtues can thus shine unhindered through lowliest deeds is one of life's wonders.

I once knew an aged widow in a little upland village who reminded me of this widow of the two mites. Her living consisted of three shillings and sixpence a week and a loaf from the parish. In autumn she tramped the moors gathering whinberries, and all the proceeds from these gatherings went into her missionary box. There was seldom less than a sovereign in it at the year end. Her gift was always anonymous, for she had a fear that if the parish authorities knew they might reduce her allowance. When one remembers the situation, the hand-to-mouth struggle, the difficulty of getting bare necessities, this gift was a brave thing. It was all her living!—F. C. Hogarth.

Sentence Sermons

The worst thing about money is that it so often costs so much.—Emerson.

Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Jesus.

Money must be always a beautiful thing: it is we that make it grimy.—Barrie.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How did James "drink the cup" that Jesus drank? (Acts 12.2.) 2. For whom are the "chief seats" prepared, according to Mt. 25.34-36; Rev. 3.21? 3. Who is the greatest man or woman you know or know about? 4. What makes him or her great?

GREATNESS THROUGH SERVICE

GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Mark 10.45

LESSON Mark 9.33-50; 10.35-45 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 42.1-7

MARK 10.35 And there come near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee. 36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37 And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on *thy* left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40 but to sit on my right hand or on *my* left hand is not mine to give: but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared. 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. 42 And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; 44 and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. 45 For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE REQUEST FOR PREFERMENT, verses 35-37. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with a special request. Matthew says that their mother came with the request (Mt. 20.20). "The case is in accordance with the law maxim 'He who does anything through another, does it himself'" (John A. Broadus). An Australian writer suggests that Mark was more chivalrous than Matthew, or else that Matthew wished to save the face of James and John, and adds, "Anyhow, it was clearly a family affair, with almost a suggestion of an Eastern intrigue. Salome may have been put up to it by her sons."

"We would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee," they began. They would have him, as it were, give them a signed check leaving them to fill in the amount as they pleased.

How like many—shall I say most?—of our petitions! We come to God to get what we want, not to learn what he wants us to have or wants from us. As Bishop Temple says, the form of all pagan prayer is, "Will you do for me what I want?" While the form of Christian prayer is, "Will you do with me and with all men what you want?"

To Jesus' question as to what they wished, they replied: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory." The two disciples were at least honest in their request; they wanted precedence and asked for it in plain words. They do not include Peter in their request for the chief places; were they jealous of him, and were they seeking to "get ahead" of him? The right and the left hand were the places of honor. Dummelow quotes a saying of Rabbi Acha to the effect that the Holy and Blessed God will cause King Messiah to sit at his right hand, and Abraham at his left.

"Rank in itself is one of the false gods which it is the business of religion and philosophy to dethrone. Outward rank deserves outward respect: genuine respect is only accorded to real usefulness" (Donald Hankey).

II. THE CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED, verses 38-40. How patient Jesus was with his slow-of-understanding pupils, and their worldly interpretation of his Messiahship! "Ye know not what ye ask," Jesus told them. They thought they were asking for worldly power. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They had no right to ask for any privilege for which they were not prepared to accept the responsibility which it entailed. Both expressions mean to endure the portion allotted one, whether good or evil, and as used by Jesus they mean to endure the suffering that awaited him. "We are able," replied these men who, when the blow fell, forsook him and fled. Jesus did not rebuke their presumption, but solemnly assured them: "The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal ye

shall be baptized." James was martyred (Acts 12.2) and John was exiled to Patmos. Tradition says that John was plunged into boiling oil, and endured other grievous sufferings, but died a natural death.

"But to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared." "Why is he, who is all powerful, unable to give this? Not from want of power, but from regard to justice. This eminence is reserved for those who are worthy to attain it. For it is not only participation in a death like his which wins the first seat, but undisputed pre-eminence in all good qualities" (Euthymius). It was prepared for those who should deserve it: see Mt. 25.34-36; Rev. 3.21. "Let us suppose that there is an umpire, and many good athletes enter the lists. Two of the athletes, who are very intimate with the umpire, approach him and say, 'Cause us to be crowned and proclaimed victors,' on the strength of the good will and friendship between them. But he says to them, 'This is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it has been prepared by their efforts and sweat'" (Chrysostom, quoted in Westminster New Testament).

"Each soul, so to speak, has its specific gravity; and will, quite naturally, go to its own place. If, then, we desire to be close to Christ there, we must keep close to him here, not seeking to be ministered to, but ministering" (F. B. Meyer).

III. TWO VIEWS OF GREATNESS, verses 41-45. The other ten disciples were indignant when they heard what James and John had asked.

The ten were indignant at the two for asking what they themselves would doubtless have asked for had they thought of it at the time. When we are indignant at what others do, is it possible that under the same circumstances we would do the same thing?

Jesus called the disciples to him and taught them wherein true greatness lies. "Ye know," he said, "that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercised authority over them." That was the worldly idea of greatness—high position which could demand service, enforce obedience, and exact signs of homage. "These disciples wanted to be great and prominent; the Lord wanted them to be pure and good. They longed to be Prime Ministers; the Lord proposed that they should be glad to be ministers, working contentedly in an obscure place. They wanted to be the King's cup-bearers; he asks for sacrifice. They seek a life of getting; he demands a life of giving. Through self-sacrifice we pass to our throne" (J. H. Jowett).

"But it is not so among you," Jesus continued; "but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." Among you the passport to power is service; you are measured, not by the way you lord it over others, but by the way you serve others: the greatest among you is the one who is most useful to your fellow men. "Jesus is trying in the words *minister* and *servant* to make very clear the distinction between greatness and primacy. It is not half so easy in our language to make that distinction fine and clear as it is in the original Greek. The word which has been translated *minister* in this particular connection has rather a superficial meaning. The word *minister,* as used here, is like the waiter who has his eye first upon your hand because he thinks that in your hand there is a tip. He is the one who does something for you because in some way he expects a return therefore. Whereas the *servant,* as used in this passage of Scripture, indicates the one attached to the real interests of his master, like a bodyguard, who considers it the highest honor and the noblest prerogative of his life, if he can only fling his whole self, without a thought of personal recompense and satisfaction, into the defense, or place himself at the disposal of the need of his master. The minister in this connection is the one who does things; the servant in this connection is the one possessed of a certain spirit" (Nehemiah Boynton).

Our word *aristocracy* comes from the two Greek words, *aristos,* best and *kratein,* to be strong, to rule. It rightly means, therefore, the rule, not of the highborn, but of the best. We can all belong to this aristocracy if we will. Whoever would become great, the true aristocrat, shall be your minister, shall serve you.

Christ is the model of true greatness. "For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for man. From the

Greek word *lutron,* translated *ransom,* are derived the Greek words for *redeem* and *redemption.* This is the first mention of Christ's death as an atoning, sacrificial death for others. It was "for man," as Chrysostom says, "sufficient for all, effectual for many." Contrast with the words of Jesus the boast of Buddha, "I am no man's servant."

"If the hundreds of millions of people who profess to follow Christ and are in some sort of organic connection with his church were to count the privilege of service above everything else, what a world this world of ours would be!" (David James Burrell).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

One on thy right and one on thy left hand, in thy glory, verse 37. One day God will be seated, and the angels will give thrones to the great ones of Israel that they, too, may sit, while God sits among them as president of the court of justice, and thus they judge the peoples of the world.—Rabbinical Saying.

A ransom, verse 45. The allusion may be to the half-shekel which every Israelite paid annually at the Passover season to the temple treasury, "a ransom for his soul unto the Lord" (Ex. 30.12-16); or to the ransom paid for captives to procure their freedom. The temple and tribute would be in their thoughts at that season. —David Smith, in Gospel of Matthew.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

How did John the Baptist show his greatness? How has Jesus shown the disciples greatness through service?

Between the Last Lesson and This

The conversation with the rich young ruler is followed in Mark by the announcement of "the things that were to happen to him," 10.32-34, and then by our text for today about the ambition of James and John.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS FROM THE LESSON

Many of our States have formulated codes of ethics for school teachers. One of the three main points in the New York State Code is as follows: "The sin of professional dishonor consists in the selfish betrayal of the ideal of service for the sake of personal ambition. It sinks the whole professional activity to the sordid level of a struggle for personal ends. The professional ideal requires that absolutely no consideration but efficient service should determine the position and mutual relation of the members." Here you are reminded of James and John.

The sin quoted above is listed as number two, and the third one is like unto it. It reads: "The third sin is the sin of professional disloyalty, which permits envy, jealousy, rivalry, and mutual distrust of one another to disintegrate the very structure of the profession." Here you recall the attitude of the ten "indignant" disciples.

These sins are far more prevalent among day school teachers than among Church School teachers, but they are not wholly lacking among the latter.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS' STANDARD OF GREATNESS

Beginning the Lesson

In Colonial times it was customary to "seat the meeting-house," or "dignify the seats," as it was also called by a committee appointed for the purpose. This committee decided how many seats should be considered of the first dignity, and when there were not seats enough for those who had equal claims an extra seat was solemnly voted of equal dignity and the fact was announced from the pulpit on Sunday. In the earliest days all were equally poor, and the seats were allotted solely on the ground of age, the dignified seats belonging to the oldest. Later the possession of property had to be taken into account, and lists were made of those whose possessions entitled them to consideration. At Southington, as Herman Temlow tells us in his Sketches, it was voted in 1799 that fifteen pounds were equal to

one year of age in rank. A man of thirty, for example, who was rated at three hundred pounds on the list, could sit among men of fifty who were not so rich as he. The decisions of the committees received much criticism, and there is a vote on record at Southington that the committee who last seated the meeting-house be instructed to reconsider their seating, and "if upon a full investigation they find that they have seated some more Higher than their age and the List carried them, and others lower, to make alterations as appear Just and Right." Has any of that early New England spirit lingered until this day in some of our churches? Have you ever felt it?

It was this same sort of feeling which prompted the sons of Zebedee to come to Jesus with their request for the best seats. What were the circumstances, and what was the answer of Jesus? The disciples had given up home and friends and work to follow Jesus, but they had not yet given up self. "He that would come after me, let him deny himself and follow me," Jesus had told them; this denial of self they had yet to make. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified. He had just told them what was before him. Yet they quarreled about who was to be first among them! Similar quarrels often come among Christian workers. "They give up everything except themselves," says Stanley Jones. "The most dangerous teaching from our Christian pulpits is that we are told to be leaders. We should be told that we must be servants. Losing our life, losing our leadership in service, brings leadership. A man is never so small as when he is trying to be great."

James and John had possessed a few fishing nets when Jesus called them to follow him. Who would expect them to aspire to the chief places in any kingdom? The longing for worldly pre-eminence is harbored by those whom one would least suspect of such thoughts.

A Gigantic Struggle Over Who Shall Be Greatest

The late war was, in its essence, a dispute as to "who shall be greatest" in the "government" of the world. Shall the world be governed in this way or that, by one set of persons or by another?—such in plain terms was the question at issue. Is there any other question, in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, for the sake of settling which mankind would find it worth while to endure such gigantic sacrifices? Is there any other value men prize so highly that to make it good they would pay the price of 12,000,000 slain, 50,000,000 maimed, and a whole continent plunged into economic ruin—to say nothing of the physical, mental, and moral agony of which these things are the symbol? Would it be possible, for example, to get up a war on this scale, or to induce mankind to endure any sort of equivalent sacrifice, for the establishment of the true religion or for the moral elevation of the masses, or the extirpation of disease, or for ending the reign of squalor and ugliness? Clearly it would be impossible. Men are willing to endure sacrifices for the things I have named, and very considerable sacrifices, too; but these, taken at their highest, are nothing compared with what they have just endured, and have been enduring for ages, to get the world "governed" according to their liking.—L. P. Jacks, in New York Evening Post.

The Church Is an Organization for Service

It is made up of men and women who have so learned Christ in following him, that they realize the supreme importance of ministry. This is the ideal. Suppose it were lived up to?

Exit Selfishness! We should have to have a new Prayer Book, with less expression of our personal need of salvation and sanctification and a deeper emphasis on the needs of a troubled world. There would be less of this, "From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine, from battle and murder and sudden death, good Lord, deliver us," and more of this; "That it may please thee to succor, help and comfort all who are in danger, necessity and tribulation, we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord." And we should require a new Hymn Book too; with a change in the pronouns of some such as "Rock of ages, cleft for me," and "Jesus lover of my soul," "Alas and did my Savior bleed," and "Am I a soldier of the Cross," with a preference for "Onward Christian soldiers," "Work for the night is coming," "Fling out the banner, let it float, skyward and seaward, high and wide!"

Exit Ambition, also, in church and State. Men would no longer be calling themselves "King, by the grace of God," but rather, "Your servant for Jesus' Sake." Tiaras would fall and canonicals would vanish. The Pharisees would doff their phylacteries; and here and there and everywhere Christians would be going, going,

going out into the highways and hedges, going down into the purlieus of our great cities, going into the regions beyond, going everywhere in the service of him who came to serve all.

And exit the Spirit of Conquest. For nations would no longer covet an enlargement of their borders, nor build great armaments to conquer the islands of the sea. The truth that was declared on Mars' Hill would prevail everywhere: "God made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation." And what would that mean but an end of war? When Ahab no longer casts a longing eye on Naboth's vineyard he may as well beat his sword into a plowshare and his spear into a pruning hook. Thus would the Golden Rule bring in the Golden Age. When each stands for the other and all for God, we shall no more be praying for the millennium; for "peace shall over all the earth, her ancient glories fling, and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing: Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men."—David James Burrell.

Jesus' Standard of Greatness

The man whose life, however he may occupy his hands, is not a service of Christ, has no right to bear his name. The man who spends his energies in the amassing of a selfish wealth, whose ambitions, even in things honorable, focus on his own advancement, whose mind is centered on his own profit or pleasure, is not walking in the way. This demand for service is not merely a call to what is known as Christian work, although no Christian will fail to find his place of helpfulness among his fellow-believers. But God does not call every man to be an apostle or an evangelist. Many men have no talents for the conspicuous activities of Christian service. They have neither the gift of the sower in the time of spring, nor of the reaper in the days of autumn. God does not ask the man of five talents to serve as the man of ten. But he does ask that every man who is walking in the way shall accept his life as one of costly self-denying service. It may be some sacrifice of his wealth, or some discharge of his obligations in civic and political life, such as may rob him of ease and leisure and luxury. It may be some ministry to the sick or the poor, to the criminal or the castaway, which may continually strain his temper and vex his spirit. It may be some unselfish method of conducting his business, which will limit its profits in order to better the condition of his employés. It may be a loyalty of mind and hand to a master which disdains mere eye-service. It may be the bearing of some humble part in the prosecution of a religious enterprise whereby the coming of the Kingdom of God is advanced.—W. M. Clow, in The Evangel of the Strait Gate.

The Story of the Château la Garaye

Some time ago, writes a contributor, I passed a ruined château in Brittany around which tragic and lovely memories gather. In former days this château was the center of gay life. Crowds of guests were entertained. There was continual hunting and continual feasting.

One day, when hunting, the Countess was thrown from her horse. She was carried home insensible, and at first it seemed as if her injuries would be fatal. She recovered, however, though she had lost the beauty and the grace of movement that were hers.

It was a great sorrow, and for a time the Count was inconsolable. But in the midst of their sorrow these two came to see life differently. They heard a still small voice in the quietness of those days that they had not heard before. For true happiness they felt they would have to change their course of life, and give themselves to kindly service, especially to the sick and poor.

They went to Paris, he to study medicine and surgery and she to study ophthalmic surgery. After three years they returned home to begin, in middle life, their great life work. Thus it was that a famous hospital and a far-reaching work of philanthrophy came to birth.

It is said that the Count would get up to attend to patients at any hour of the night. He always rose at half past four and studied in his laboratory till seven; then came family prayers, then patients and the day's successive tasks until night came.

The Countess was a ministering angel among her patients, whom she nursed by night as well as by day. She was also a savior of souls, and she brought back many to the faith of their youth.

When on one occasion there were two thousand prisoners crowded in the castle

at Dinan, and many were dying of fever, the Count, hearing of their fate, came to minister to them and saved many lives.

Such in brief is the story of the Château la Garaye near Dinan in Brittany, and such are the memories that gather round the ivied ruin. It is just one more instance of beautiful service inspired by a great sorrow. So many of the world's noblest philanthropies have had their origin in life's dark experiences; they were lights born in darkness, songs that arose in the desert.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The serving Christ. See Chapter V of Remember Jesus Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

2. The Christian's call to service. See Chapter XII of The Life That Really Is, by Lyman Abbott.

3. Our opportunities for service.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What did the triumphal entry mean to the disciples? 2. To the people? 3. To the Pharisees? 4. To Jesus? 5. How may your place of worship be to you a place of traffic? 6. At what was Christ angry? 7. At what should we be angry?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO BE TRULY GREAT

Beginning the Lesson

A missionary in Alaska had a number of well-trained dogs to draw his sled from place to place. There was one fine dog who always led, and very proud he was of his place at the head of the team. The missionary thought it wise to train another dog to lead, so that in case anything happened to this one, he might not be without a leader. The first time he harnessed his second-best dog ahead of the first, the first one dropped to the ground and refused to rise. When he had been forced to get up and go on, he gnawed the harness of the new leader till that one was freed and he was again at the head of the pack. Several times he did this, and then his master took him out of the pack, tied him up, and forced him to look on while the other dog received his training. This so angered and grieved the dog that he soon died of a broken heart. He must have first place or none.

Sometimes boys and girls act like that dog. Did you ever know any one who must have the important place in every game or he wouldn't play? Or if he did play, would do it very ungraciously? Even John and James, two of the disciples, wanted for themselves the best places in Christ's kingdom. How did Christ teach them that they might be truly great?

The Right Ambition

I do not think it wrong to be ambitious. I hope you all are. Boys and girls are not worth much unless they aspire to better things. But the ambitions must be of the right kind, worthy of us and pleasing to God. And the story tells us what these are.

Here we have two ambitions. What did the two disciples want? Just about the highest, biggest place there was in the Kingdom. They didn't ask themselves if they were worthy of it, nor were they anxious. All they were out for was the chief place, its great position. Now Jesus had ambitions and aspirations, too. What were they? Well, he was not troubling about thrones and crowns. What he wanted was not a big place, but to do big things—to comfort men, to heal them, to raise the dead, to lift the world out of its darkness and unbelief and to redeem it. His ambition was the great task.

The boy who says, "Make me a knight, a lord, a duke, a millionaire, a prime minister," is on the wrong track. The boy who says, "Help me to write a big book, to paint a big picture, to do a big thing to comfort and help my fellows," is on the right road. The places are nothing. The big deeds are everything. Great deeds are infinitely higher than great places.—C. E. Stone.

What a War Hero Is Doing

Do you remember Alvin C. York, the sergeant from Tennessee, who emerged from the Great War as the most conspicuous individual hero among the American troops?

His most remarkable exploit was accomplished in the battle of the Argonne, when at the head of a squad of seven men he attacked a strongly entrenched battalion of German machine-gunners, put the battery out of action, killed a good many more men than were in his own force and marched one hundred thirty-two prisoners back into the American lines. He is entitled to wear the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest of military decorations, the French Médaille Militaire and Croix de Guerre, the Italian Croce di Guerra and the Montenegrin medal for bravery on the field. If you are looking for a real military hero, Sergeant York is your man.

The best thing about him is that he has turned out to be as fine a type of American manhood in peace as he was in war. When he came back from the other side he had plenty of chances to capitalize his fame by appearing on the stage or in the moving pictures. But he did nothing of the sort. He did go about lecturing and he made $15,000 in that way. What did he do with it? He gave it all to a fund for establishing a school of industrial education among the hills of eastern Tennessee, whence he himself had come. He worked with the legislature of his state till it added $50,000 more. He got various people to give the land for his school. He has fourteen hundred acres now, and he has raised money enough to go ahead with the building of his school.

Alvin C. York, in war and in peace, is a citizen of whom the United States can be proud.—The Youth's Companion.

A Lesson from the Hebrew Grammar

A man of high character but ordinary education was addressing a roomful of school children, and he said to them: "All of you know the verb which says, 'I am, thou art, he is'; and all of you know that verbs in English, French, German, Italian and Latin run in this way: I love, thou lovest, he loves; or I walk, thou walkest, he walks. But do you know that that is a very bad way for a verb to run? Do you know that the old Hebrew people arranged their verbs the other way round: He is, thou art, I am?"

Then he added: "That is the way to look at life. Say to yourself, looking up to God, 'He is'; then look at your neighbor and say, 'You are'; last of all think of yourself and say, 'I am.' First God, then your neighbor, then yourself. That is the way to think and to live."

One who heard this story was so struck by the thought that he could not rest until he found a Hebrew scholar able to tell him whether it really was true that Hebrew verbs are conjugated in this way. He sought out a scholar and put his question. "Yes," said the scholar, "the Hebrew verb is conjugated as you say. Why do you ask?" So the other told him what the man had said to the children.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the scholar with radiant face. "I have been studying Hebrew forty years, and never once has it occurred to me that Hebrew verbs have that wonderful and beautiful significance!"

He sat for some moments saying: "He is, thou art, I am. How beautiful! Yes, to be sure: He is, you are, I am. Wonderful, wonderful!"—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

The way of greatness is the way of duty.—Horace Bushnell.

Lord, give me grace
To take the lowest place;
Nor even desire
Unless it be thy will
To go up higher.—Christina Rossetti.

I would forget my paltry life, so small,
And know thy greatness, thou, my All in All.
—Thomas Curtis Clark.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where was Bethany? 2. What two reasons does John give for the presence of the multitude with Jesus? (Jn. 12.12, 17, 18.) 3. How many days between the Triumphal Entry and the Crucifixion? 4. Who objected to the hosannas, and what did Jesus say? (Lk. 19.37-40; Mt. 21.15-17.) 5. What can you do to show that you honor Jesus? 6. For what purpose were the money-changers in the temple court? (Ex. 30.13.) 7. Why were the doves there? (Lev. 1.14.) 8. Why was Jesus angered? 9. Was Jesus ever angry at anything done to himself? 10. When is it right for you to be angry?

LESSON VII—MAY 13

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation. Zechariah 9.9

LESSON Mark 11.1-33 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24.7-10

MARK 11.1 And when they draw nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples, 2 and saith unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you: and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him. 3 And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither. 4 And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. 5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go. 7 And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat upon him. 8 And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10 Blessed *is* the kingdom that cometh, *the kingdom* of our father David: Hosanna in the highest.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; 16 and he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple. 17 And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers. 18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. CHRIST'S KINGSHIP OPENLY PROCLAIMED, verses 1-10. On the day which we now call Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of his life, Jesus made his triumphant entry of Jerusalem. On approaching Bethphage and Bethany, not far from the city, Jesus bade two of his disciples go into the village opposite, where on entering they would find a colt tied which no man had ever ridden; this animal they were to loose and bring to him. If questioned as to their action they were to say, "The Lord hath need of him and will return him to you after he has been ridden." The disciples found the colt in a public street fastened to a door, and as they unloosed him were questioned, but upon answering as Jesus had directed they were permitted to take him away. The owner was evidently a friend of Jesus.

They brought the colt and put their loose, outer robes upon him for their Master to sit upon. Others spread their garments on the road, and yet others secured branches of palm trees (Jn. 12.13) and cast them down for him to ride over. And the crowd that went before as well as the crowd that followed cried, "Hosanna (Save now; compare the acclamation, God save the King); Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the Kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest." The words are from the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "The Messianic Psalm," the last one of the five "Hallel Psalms" which were sung by the people as they wended their way around the altar at the great festivals. Their use on this occasion indicated that the people recognized Jesus as the Messiah. "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem," Zechariah had cried; "behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." This prophecy Jesus intentionally fulfilled. The words were prophetic of a peaceful king, not of a warrior. The ass was the animal for labor; the horse was for war. "In reality the ride over the Mount of Olives was Jesus' last attempt to convey to those about him by symbolic act that which his words had failed to convey, that he had not come to be a conquering warrior or political King, but a lowly Servant and Prince of Peace" (George A. Barton).

Mark does not tell us what happened in Jerusalem. From the other Gospels we learn how it all ended, how the crowd who without the walls had acclaimed him King, within the city said half-heartedly, "This is the prophet, Jesus of Nazareth." Read Matthew 21 and Luke 19.

"There is no clearer illustration of the ineffectiveness of mere admiration for Jesus. There must be conviction. and conviction that is ready to be translated into unswerving loyalty. Admiration evaporates under the breath of criticism. The obedient are adamant. His spirit passes into them and his spirit is unconquerable."

Why did Jesus deliberately make his triumphal entry of Jerusalem? It reversed the policy of his public ministry. He had hitherto avoided the spectacular. He had refused to let the people proclaim him king. Now he not only allowed this, but intentionally planned for it. "It was a concession to human nature as that was displayed around him," says Dr. John Kelman. "Moreover then, for the first time, such a concession was safe. His task had been to insist upon the Kingdom, and yet to avoid all attempts to make him king. For over two years he had managed the populace as a skillful rider manages a restive horse, now drawing, and now slackening, rein. Thus he had kept a bloody revolution at arm's length. But now, at last, there was no danger of such a revolution. There was, indeed, no time for it, for his death was distant but a few days, and he must have known it."

II. THE RETURN TO BETHANY AND THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE ON THE MORROW, verses 11-14. Before he went with The Twelve to Bethany for the night, Jesus entered the temple and looked around. The place was very familiar to him, he had known it from boyhood. Now, however, he was in the house of God as Judge. "We must not think of the cleansing of the temple as if it were on a swift impulse. If Mark is to be followed, the Savior had seen on the evening before that day the temple with all its marks of defilement. He took time to reflect upon it: he slept upon it."

"What if this temple be the outward emblem of the inward temple of our hearts into which Jesus enters silently and thoughtfully, around which he still looks? What if that temple stands for all temples, all churches, all religious societies? Would it make any difference to them if they knew that the silent Figure, with eyes from which nothing escapes, were present?" (Edward Shillito).

III. CHRIST DEFIES THE TEMPLE AUTHORITIES, verses 15-18. On the following day Jesus entered the Court of the Gentiles of the temple, cast out buyers and sellers, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. See Light from Oriental Life.

"These words show us Christ's estimate of profiteering. A profiteer is a thief, whether he asks an unfair price for goods, for the use of capital, or for the labor of his hands. In the eyes of Jesus the great profanation of the temple by the market was that men, placed there to interpret God to the people and to help them to worship him, deliberately turned the place and their office into instruments of unjust gain for themselves. We can easily see from this what Christ would think of many of the methods of modern business" (George A. Barton).

The people had been making a public thoroughfare of the temple, carrying baskets and all sorts of utensils through in this short cut from one part of the town to the other, and this he now stopped. You remember that when the temple was being built so great was the reverence for the House of God that the blocks were made ready in the quarry so that they could be put together without the sound of a hammer. In King Lear, when the Earl of Kent desires to attach himself to the exiled king, he gives as his reason, "You have that in your face that I would fain call master-authority." This master-authority was in the face of Christ, and all yielded to it without a protest.

"How great the contrast between the meek and lowly King riding into Jerusalem and the righteously indignant Judge and Reformer in the temple! There were fire and force as well as warmth and gentleness, regal masterfulness as well as long-suffering patience, in our King."

The temple poll-tax of a half-shekel was paid at this Passover feast, and there were beside contributions to be made for the morning and evening sacrifices and for other causes. In the Court of the Women there were thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes, each inscribed with its special religious or charitable cause, into which offerings were cast. The temple-tax and all the contributions had to be made in Jewish

money. See Light from Oriental Life. Money-changers were a necessity, but they were not needed within the temple courts. "We can picture to ourselves the scene," writes Dr. Edersheim; "the weighing of the coins, the deductions for loss of weight, the arguing, disputing, bargaining—and we can realize the terrible truthfulness of our Lord's charge that they had made the Father's house a mart and place of traffic."

"In many a pew, grave of face and reverent of demeanor, sit today those who have brought their market with them; their thoughts are busy with business problems, with proposed deals and the framing of new contracts. They are not worshipping, they are occupied with selling and money-changing. Many a home-keeper plans a dinner or remodels dresses for the children while she sits quietly through the sermon which she only half hears. Bringing our cares to God is one thing—the temple does not bar burdened hearts—but bringing them for our own settling in the place and hour of worship is quite another. The tables of the money changers, now as in the days of old, belong outside."

"Is it not written," Jesus thundered, "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations (Isa. 56.7)? But ye have made it a den of robbers."

"Once again, O Man of Wonder,
Let thy voice be heard!
Speak as with a sound of thunder;
Drive the false thy roof from under,
Teach thy priests thy word"
(Richard Watson Gilder).

"Jesus must have felt much the same as Luther did centuries afterwards when he came face to face with the corruption and materialism of the Vatican. St. Peter's at Rome was to Christendom then what the temple was to the Jews in Jesus' day."

"Who does not glory in those burning words of hot impatience with which Jesus showed that he could not abide the meanness of canting Pharisees and sophist Sadducees? Who has not heard the whip of small cords sing through the close air of the superstitious temple and clear the atmosphere as thunder does? Who has not been led into new thoughts of manly life by hearing Jesus rebuke Chorazin and Bethsaida? We must not let these scenes go out of the life of Jesus. If we do, we shall forget to be indignant with meanness and oppression. We fret if a trifle is wrong about our dinner, if a rival gets before us in the hunt for notoriety, if a companion does not pay us what we think the due respect; and we are calm as statues and smile on in perfect satisfaction while the laws of God are violated and the poor are wronged by our side" (Phillips Brooks).

When the chief priests and scribes were told of Jesus' high-handed act, they tried to find some way in which they could compass his death. They feared him, however, for all the people were astonished at his teaching.

IV. THE FUTILE CHALLENGE OF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, verses 27-33. The chief priests and scribes challenged his authority. At once Jesus put them on the defensive by a question which showed they had no right to debate his authority. What had been their attitude in a previous case? John had saluted Jesus as Messiah. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? If they answered, "From God," must not Jesus be the promised Messiah, and would Jesus not say to them, "Why, then, did ye not believe John?" If they said, "From men," the people who believed John to have been a prophet, would turn against them. They dared not answer: "We know not," was all they would say. And Jesus returned, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

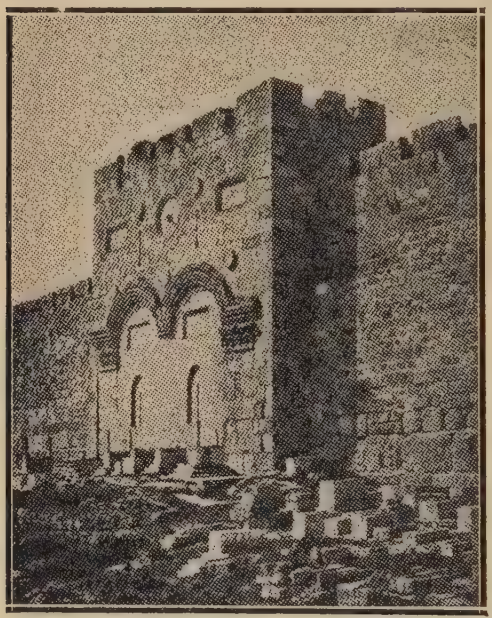
"Men who will not take sides for fear lest their own fortunes should suffer are ruled out of any discussion upon religious authority."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Ye shall find a colt, verse 2. From the other Gospels we learn that it was the foal of an ass. In oriental nations men of the highest rank preferred the ass to the horse for riding. The ass is said to have been of a more stately and hand-

some appearance than the ignoble animal of the same kind found in countries farther north. The colt "whereon no man ever yet sat" was chosen because it was thought better fitted for a sacred use than an animal which had performed labor.

And they came to Jerusalem, verse 15. Jesus passed through the Golden Gate. In early Christian times the gate was believed to be the same as the Gate Beautiful mentioned in the third chapter of Acts. In fact, the word "golden" probably arose from a confusion of the Greek word *Horaea* (beautiful) with the Latin *aurea* (golden). Although all Christian people have the best of reasons for loving this gate, it also occupies an important place in the traditions of the Jews and of the Mohammedans. The commonly accepted story is that the Turks walled up the entrance so that the future Jewish Messiah could not enter here. The Mohammedans have a characteristically childish notion that Mohammed will walk across the brook Kidron on a hair stretched from the top of the Mount of Olives, over this gate, into the city.—William Lyon Phelps.



The Golden Gate

He began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, verse 15. A traveler in India writes: "I never see one of those places famed as resorts for worship of the gods in India without thinking of the Master and his whip of small cords as he drove the money-changers and merchants out of the temple. In the great Hindu temple at Cawnpore the petty merchant was much in evidence with his small booth for the sale of things connected with the worship, and it resembled nothing so much as the side-show equipment of the ordinary circus, or the environs of a fair-grounds at home."

He overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves, verse 15. Another thing afforded an opportunity for great profit. While independent under the Asmonean dynasty from 143 to 63 B. C., the Jews had issued a silver coinage. These coins were called "shekels." A silver shekel was about the size of a quarter of a dollar, only about twice as thick; a half-shekel was about the size of a ten cent piece, only a good deal thicker. After the Roman conquest of Palestine the Jews were not permitted to issue anything but copper coins. All larger denominations of money, except such old coins as were still in circulation, were of Roman or Parthian origin. Then, as now, old coins continued to circulate. Although the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria had been subject to Rome for years, silver coins issued by their kings still passed from hand to hand. At various times different Greek and Phœnician cities had issued silver coins, many of which were still in circulation. Pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem to the Feasts from Parthia, Media, Babylonia, Cappadocia, Pontus, the Province of Asia (where the kingdom of Pergamon had flourished and issued its coins), Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia, not to mention other countries, would bring with them quite a museum of different kinds of money.

This gave the priests another opportunity for gain. They insisted that the sacrifices should be paid for in Jewish money, which by this time had assumed in their eyes a semi-sacred character. Money-changers became, therefore, as necessary as an animal-market. These men did not change money for nothing. Some Jews had already developed that financial instinct which has made members of that race

such successful bankers in the modern world, and large profits were made by money-changers as well as by the market men. All this business was in the hands of the priesthood, and, while certain profits were supposed to go to the Temple-treasury, there is reason to believe that that on animals and on money-changing went to the priests themselves, especially to the high-priestly family. When men get a monopoly of anything, they are always exposed to the temptation to profiteer, and most men yield to the temptation. These Jewish priests were no exception. They charged exorbitant prices and made enormous profits. It is on record that they once demanded about $3.90 for a couple of pigeons, which, through the influence of Simon, grandson of Hillel, they afterward sold for four cents! Four cents was about the usual market price of pigeons at that time.—George A. Barton, in Jesus of Nazareth.

A Money-Changer in the East

He would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple, verse 16. "What is the reverence due the temple?" asked the rabbis, and they answered, "That none go through the court of it with his staff and shoes and purse, and dust upon his feet, and that none make it a common thoroughfare or let any of his spittle fall upon it."

Ye have made it a den of robbers, verse 17. The temple market arose from the desire to meet the necessaries of the pilgrims from afar. Not only must they have money changed into Jewish coin, but they must secure for sacrifice birds and beasts which had been duly certified to be ritually clean. The temple market was a monopoly. It was, moreover, owned, or leased, by the sons of the High Priest Annas, as we learn from rabbinic literature, and they were noted for their greed and dishonesty. Said a rabbi: "They were themselves high priests, their sons treasurers, their sons-in-law assistant treasurers, while their servants beat the people with sticks." Business and religion were united. The business which was a monopoly was controlled by those who themselves profited by exorbitant charges. The temple had been made a den of robbers.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

When before had the people wished to make Jesus king? How did he then escape from them? In what other way has Jesus sought to avoid public acclaim? What has Jesus said would befall him at Jerusalem?

The Order of Events on Friday to Monday of Holy Week

Until now Mark's account of Christ's life has been of a fragmentary nature, a

little told here and a little there. Now he devotes one third of his Gospel to a circumstantial record of the last week of Christ's life.

Taking the information given by all four Evangelists, most scholars agree upon the following order of events:—

On Friday Jesus left Jericho, where he had restored sight to Bartimæus, and reached Bethany before the Sabbath began, which was reckoned from evening to evening. Many place the departure from Jericho and the arrival at Bethany on the Sabbath. It was a journey of sixteen miles from one place to the other.

Saturday, the Sabbath, was spent quietly at Bethany. The supper when Mary broke her alabaster box and anointed the feet of Jesus took place that evening, after the Sabbath was ended.

Sunday (Palm Sunday) the triumphal entry into Jerusalem was made. After entering the temple, Jesus returned to Bethany for the night. (It was on Monday, according to Mark, that he cleansed the temple.)

The Effect upon the Temple Authorities of the Cleansing of the Temple

They were wounded where they were most susceptible. In teaching the historic cause of the death of Jesus it is a mistake to ignore this act. The Sadducees, who were the dominant party in the control of the temple, gave other reasons for their attack upon Jesus. They called his conduct "blasphemy," but they really meant simply, "Our interests are in danger." "Financial considerations rather than theological hatred," Dr. Lake has said, "were the real causes of the accusation of the priests, though they dressed it up in a partly political, partly religious form."—Edward Shillito.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Bethany is two miles from Jerusalem, on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, facing the Dead Sea and the Jordan. Its modern name is El-Azariyah, the Arab name for Lazarus.

Bethphage means "House of Figs." It was the name either of the village close to Bethany or of the region between the wall of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. The Talmud says, "Whatever is in the exterior circuit of Jerusalem is called Bethphage."

Jesus entered Jerusalem, tradition says, through the Golden Gate, the gate in the eastern wall which was found walled up in the time of the Crusades, and was opened once a year, on Palm Sunday. It is now kept closed. On one day, almost exactly nineteen hundred years ago, "the solidly-walled-up gate stood wide open to admit the light of the sun and the Light of the World," William Lyon Phelps writes. "The portal faced due east, and the brilliant rays of the sun came out of the mist hanging over the Dead Sea, crowned the Mount of Olives, bathed the Garden of Gethsemane, changed by heavenly alchemy the water of the brook Kidron into living gold, and flooded the great gate with triumphant radiance."

It is important to remember that the word "temple" was applied to the whole temple area within its encircling wall, not alone to the sanctuary with its Holy Place and Holy of Holies. When Jesus entered the temple he did not enter the sanctuary, but the outer Court of the Gentiles.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The vivid portrayal of the scenes of the first Palm Sunday will evoke a response from the children and young people as certainly as the events themselves kindled into flame the latent sentiments of the multitude on Olivet.

That the work of the Church school may attain its supreme end in the lives of its members, it is required that there be the observance of special occasions. It is not enough that they observe the practise of worship, instruction in religious truth, and the expression of Christian teaching in action. There must come an hour when even the most reverent worship is surcharged with new feeling because it has become the spontaneous expression of the soul, bowing before a Savior newly revealed.

The use of an acknowledgment card on this day is to be commended, such as: "I do acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Savior. It is my honest purpose to serve him all my life, trusting in him to help me."

The greatest hindrance to a significant observance of Palm Sunday as Acknowledgment Day lies not in our pupils, but in ourselves as teachers and leaders. Careful

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THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, ON THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE

preparation for the service should be made, but all the while we shall do well to bear in mind that a large part of the preparation required is the preparation of our own hearts.—Condensed from an Editorial in The Sunday School Journal.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS ASSERTS MESSIANIC AUTHORITY

Beginning the Lesson

The Literary Editor of the London Missionary Society finely portrays the situation which Jesus has now reached:

"The evangelist has come to the heart of his narrative. He is now within the circle of the cross. The scale changes; the speed of the narrative slackens. Throughout the Gospel Jesus has the bearing of one who is moving toward an end, in the light of which all the earlier words and deeds would be interpreted. Everything waits for the revelation of the cross. Now that the last week begins there is a change in the action. The air becomes heavy with destiny. There is no conscious art, but the impression is none the less clear. The days now stand out one by one in the light of the cross, the former themes are gathering to one tremendous climax."

How Did Jerusalem Receive Her King?

The simple-minded people came streaming out to meet him. The thoughtful, puzzled students, not hostile, with some degree of sympathy, sat at home listening to the tumult and wondering whether it could possibly be that this was "He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." Those whom he had cured of sickness blessed him anew as they heard of his approach. Those who had believed in him felt their faith deepen at the sound of his triumph. Those who despised him sneered anew at the people's Idol. "Have any of the Pharisees believed on him?" they said over and over to one another. The priests hugged their traditions closer and said, "There is nothing about him here." There were groups of Sadducees who looked with a sort of superior pity upon the whole transaction. They turned aside to let the host sweep by, and then looked after it and shook their heads, with that sort of pity which is at the heart of the intensest pride. The pride that hates is never so intensely supercilious and proud as the pride that pities. There were those, too, who hated Christ; some people whom he interfered with; some people who felt that they could not live in the same city with him—that either he or they must give way and go out. There were the Pharisees, who saw in Jesus the contradiction of all their most treasured traditions and favorite ideas; and there were the sinners, whom he had rebuked for all their different kinds of sins. The Pharisees said, "If what this Teacher says is true, all that I say is false." The sinner said, "If what this Master commands is right, my life is horrible." Between each of these men and Jesus there was war to the death. One or the other of them must yield or die. The lordly Romans stalked by superciliously, hardly deigning to glance at the passing procession, only wondering what these absurd, fantastic Hebrews would do next. Each man, according to his nature, answered to the coming of Christ. It was like the judgment day.—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

How We Receive Our King

Let us set our own soul on that rocky hill and see Christ come to it. Long heard of, not a stranger, having often passed before our sight, at last he comes finally and formally to claim us for his own, solemnly to assert that we belong to him, to bid us make our choice whether we will take him for our King or not. Such days do come to all of us—days when we feel as if the Savior, who had been long tempting us, had gathered up all his power of appeal and expected to be then either accepted or rejected; days when the chance of the new spiritual life seems to stand with peculiar solemnity before our hearts. Such days are to us what Palm Sunday was to Jerusalem.—Phillips Brooks.

This Christ Is Our King

We do not make him so. We might not have another if we liked. There is only one, and he is King whether men acknowledge it or not. If I rebel against the government, that does not wipe out the government. It merely makes me a rebel. We do not ask men to make of Christ what he is not. We ask them to acknowledge him to be what he is. Their refusal does not destroy his kingship, and so set

them free from sovereignty. It only stamps them as disloyal and traitorous to their true Head and Lord. When the students in Japan cabled some years ago to the students at Northfield, "Make Jesus King," they did not propose that men should make of Christ what he was not already, but that men should recognize Christ to be what he ever has been and ever will be. We cannot deprive him of his character, and we do not give it to him. We only yield ourselves to it. We fall into our place. We live again in God.—Robert E. Speer.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. High-wrought emotion is a poor substitute for steady devotion; but cool, unemotional recognition of Christ as King is just as unnatural.—Alexander Maclaren.

2. The righteous indignation of Jesus. See Chapter XXIII of The Character of Jesus, by Charles E. Jefferson; Chapters VII and XXIV of The Life of Christ by W. J. Dawson.

3. Are we as a nation heedless in the presence of human wrong? It is an alarming thing, says Henri Detouche, for a people when decent folk show less energy in attacking evil than criminals show in protecting it.

"Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?—
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O, shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name!"

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why was Jesus' answer to the Herodians so effective? 2. What bearing has the answer upon our political life? 3. Do you think the scribe was honest in asking his question, or did he wish to entangle Jesus? 4. What did Jesus mean by his commendation of the scribe? 5. Since the two commandments which Jesus gives are found in the Old Testament, what great service did Jesus do by his words of verses 29 and 30? 6. How can we prove our love for God?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE KINGLY QUALITIES OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

Once when Napoleon returned from his successful wars in Italy and Austria and had been greeted with great applause by the people, some one said to him that such an enthusiastic demonstration must be very pleasant to him. "Bah!" he returned, "this same unthinking crowd, under a slight change of circumstances would follow me as eagerly to the scaffold!"

Jesus was never misled by the enthusiasm of the crowd. After the feeding of the five thousand, he said to the crowd who followed him across the lake, "Ye seek me because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." When the crowds proclaimed him King on his way to Jerusalem the last Sabbath of his life, Jesus knew well that their enthusiasms would wane. He had no doubt about the end. The same crowd that shouted "Hosanna!" that day, cried "Crucify him, crucify him" a few days later. In the background of Tintoretto's picture of the Crucifixion there is an ass eating the dead leaves of the palm branches which had been waved as Jesus made his triumphal entry—thus the artist portrayed the fickleness of the people.

Under what circumstances was the triumphal entry made? Why do we call the Sabbath preceding the Crucifixion, Palm Sunday?

The Cross Made Out of Palms

On the Sunday before Easter in many churches the boys and girls who come to Sunday-school, and all the people who come to church, are given little crosses to pin on their coats and dresses.

Palms are used for gladness, and for triumph; and a cross means pain and death. Why should things like palms, which suggest so much that is beautiful, be made into something terrible like a cross? Palms and crosses seem so different that they do not belong together at all.

When we think of Jesus, and think of the palms, we see again the people shouting his name, and crowding around him as though they admired him and loved him better than any one else in the world. But, presently, something very different happened. People began to find out that Jesus was not going to do the kind of things they had hoped. He was not come as a King, to make everybody rich

of a sudden, and everything easy and smooth. He had come to teach the love of God; but men had to be in earnest to listen to him. They were disappointed, and as they were disappointed they began to grow angry. They listened to evil men who wanted to get rid of Jesus. Before many days went by, the same crowd which had gone shouting out to meet him, and strewn the palm branches on his road, went roaring into the Hall of Pilate, and lifted fierce hands against Jesus, and cried, "Crucify him!" And that day they went out to Calvary, and looked on with hard eyes as he was crucified.

So there was a real sense in which the palms had changed into the cross. The people seemed to welcome Jesus at first, but it was no real welcome. It was made up of words,—very shallow, and very false,—which presently changed into hateful deeds. They were glad one day to name his name, but just as glad a few days afterwards to see him put to death.

And is not that the way it is sometimes with people even now? We may seem to welcome Jesus, but perhaps that welcome is not real. We speak his name as though we loved him, and then we turn against him, as though we did not love him at all.

Suppose a boy comes to Sunday-school and learns about Jesus. Perhaps he even joins the church, and stands up before God and the congregation and says that he wants to follow Jesus. Then perhaps the next day he goes to school, and when he is playing baseball he plays it in a mean, unfair way. If he thinks the umpire is not looking, he trips up another boy who is running the bases. He plays like a tough instead of like a gentleman. Or he bullies some small boy who is playing the game with him. Then other boys who look at him may shrug their shoulders. They think to themselves, "Is this all that it means to say you want to be Christ's follower?" What the boy said about the Lord Jesus does not matter very much. The thing that counts is what he does. Really to follow Jesus means courage, and honor, and fairness, and truth. When a boy throws all these things away he is turning the palms of the fine words he said into the cross of a false betrayel.

Or suppose a girl who has said that she, too, wants to learn to love Christ and to follow him, and in Sunday-school sings the hymns and looks as glad as the people did who came out of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, goes home and is crabbed and cross. Suppose she is in a bad temper about everything her mother suggests which she does not want to do, and is continually insisting that everybody else should do things for her, and never wants herself to be loving and helpful in all the little things at home which might be done for others. Do you think that Christ can have much pleasure in the palms of the words she said and the hymns she sang in Sunday-school? But what we have said need not be the end of the story. Palms do not have to change into a cross. We can say we love him, and want to follow him, and mean it altogether. We can be Christians who once having welcomed Jesus into our lives keep him there forever. We can live lives so faithful that we shall be always praising him, and making others look up in expectation because through us Jesus will be coming into their midst along a beautiful way.—Condensed from The Armor of Youth, by W. Russell Bowie.

Sentence Sermons

Let every nation, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe
And crown him Lord of All.

Christ is the mightiest Monarch of all: he reigns over an infinitely wider domain than other rulers, and his Kingdom still grows.—J. D. Jones.

Follow the Christ, the King.
Live pure, speak true, right wrong.—Tennyson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How did the Pharisees expect to ensnare Jesus in their talk? 2. What does the word "Cæsar" mean? 3. What false charge did the Pharisees bring against Jesus two days later, as told in Lk. 23.2? 4. What does the word *neighbor* mean as used in verse 31? 5. What parable teaches who one's neighbor is? 6. What does James 2.8 call the second commandment? 7. Which of the Ten Commandments are covered by the first great commandment? 8. Which, by the second great commandment? 9. What one adverb could be used instead of all the phrases of verse 30?

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

GOLDEN TEXT: He taught them as one having authority. Matthew 7.29

LESSON Mark 12.13-44

MARK 12.13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk. 14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it. 16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him.

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? 29 Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: 30 and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. 31 The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. 32 And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: 33 and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.1-8

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CAPTIOUS QUESTION IN REGARD TO TRIBUTE, verses 13-17. The Herodians were a small political party who were partisans of Herod. A few of the Pharisees sympathized with the Herodians, but most Pharisees hated them as cordially as they did the Sadducees, yet they united with Herodians and Sadducees in a plot to ensnare Jesus. The men whom they sent to Jesus prefaced their remarks by saying that the question they were about to propound was a dangerous one to answer, but they knew that he was not afraid of consequences: "Thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God," they said. Thus would they flatter him and put him off his guard.

Then they asked their question, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" "The 'tribute,' literally 'census money'—that is, poll tax—was paid by every Jew. It was inquisitorial, followed a careful taking of the census, in which every man was obliged to report his family, his property, and his income, and was extremely odious to the Jews, who counted it a badge of their national degradation. Its payment was resisted by some, especially among the Galileans, not only on political but also on religious grounds" (Lyman Abbott). A recent writer suggests that had Germany triumphed and succeeded in imposing her imperialistic scheme on the world, we should have had something comparable to the world order in the time of Christ. Rome had triumphed and had imposed her power on all the nations bordering the Mediterranean. Her system was that of force. The Jews hated this foreign compulsion. They endured it only because they feared to attempt to throw it off.

The Pharisees asked their question with malice of forethought. If Jesus said "Yes," he would bitterly antagonize the people, and if he said "No," they could accuse him of treason to the Roman government. And, indeed, two days later they falsely said to Pilate, "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar," Lk. 23.2.

"Shall we give, or shall we not give?" they put the question plainly. Here was their alternative: pay tribute to a foreign power where emperor worship prevailed, or refuse to pay and remain loyal to God. They thought that whatever answer Jesus made, it would condemn him. Jesus denied there was an alternative: both were aspects of one duty. He would not teach contempt of the established government and disobedience to law. Nor would he teach disloyalty to God.

We are prone to place life's duties in opposition. We think that fidelity in the discharge of one duty excuses us for the neglect of another duty.

We say, "I have so many church duties I cannot fulfil all my home duties," or, "My heavy business cares absolve me from any part in civic or welfare work." Christ tells us it is not either or, but both and.

Jesus well knew their evil intent, he quickly saw through the purpose of their flattering words. "Why make ye trial of me?" he asked, as he called for a coin, a denarius on which was graven the image and name of Cæsar. The coin represented Rome's services to the people governed, as well as Rome's power and authority. "Whose is this image and superscription?" he asked. (A small boy in Australia in telling the story gave it thus: "He asked them to show him a penny, and when they gave it to him he said, Whose miserable subscription is this?")

"Cæsar's," they replied. Then said Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Render, give back; the coin came from Cæsar, and they owed him something in return. They were accepting the services of Cæsar's government; for these services they must render an equivalent.

The right of coinage involved the right of taxation. "If a king's coin is current in a country, the men of that country do thereby evidence that they acknowledge him for their lord" (Talmud).

"Let the church shed the light of warning and reproof upon the immoral citizen who enjoys the benefit of citizenship and evades its responsibilities; the dishonest merchant who uses part of his gains to purchase political protection and his good reputation to cover the transaction; the recreant preacher who denounces the corruptions of government 'down in Judea' and ignores the same corruptions in the United States; the lawyers who study the laws in order to defend their clients in evading them; and the officials who profess to serve the State and then add—'The State—that's me.' The light of the church should also fall upon the true heroes of the republic, the brave soldiers, the loyal citizens, the pure statesmen, that all men may know that the church recognizes these men as servants of the most high God because they are indeed and in truth the servants of the people" (Henry van Dyke).

"And unto God the things that are God's." "I must tell you," said Andrew Melville to James the Sixth, "that there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland; there is King James, the head of this commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member."

"Why do preachers emphasize the claims of the Kingdom of Christ as being supreme? Is not their putting of the case an injury to our patriotism? And are we not bound to place our country first in all our thought of the world?" What do you think of the patriot who asked these questions of Dr. Cadman? A religious paper in commenting upon him and the millions of people like him, recalls the just criticisms we passed during the War upon the State-worship in Germany, and adds that instead of learning from Germany the dangers of perverted patriotism we seem to be seeking to improve on the German model. **The virtue of patriotism is a cardinal virtue, but the vice of patriotism is a menace to the world.**

The former Kaiser was one of the monarchs who thought the things of God were the things of Cæsar. A fair-minded Frenchman, M. Fabre Luce, says of him: "He represented a world divided into peoples and kings, the latter constituting a large international family of overlords, who exchanged presents and combined to defeat horrible revolution. His mind was accustomed to hasty generalizations and sumptuous imagery, the prolongation of nursery conditions all through life, the idea of being related to God himself, the inextricable mixture of religion and politics, the conception of history as a series of inspired decisions, heaven being pictured in the image of the throne."

II. A CAPTIOUS QUESTION IN REGARD TO THE RESURRECTION, verses 18-27.

III. A SINCERE QUESTION IN REGARD TO THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, verses 28-34. One of the scribes, who had been listening to the questions and answers and who knew that Jesus had answered well then asked, "What commandment is the first of all?" See Light from Oriental Life. It would seem that this scribe was an honest inquirer: note Jesus' commendation, verse 34.

Jesus answered by quoting from Deuteronomy: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

"All the lovers of God love him in all four of these ways at once, with heart and mind and soul and strength. The difference between people is not a difference of distinction, so that some love God with their hearts altogether and not with their souls at all. It is a difference of emphasis, just as everybody has some imagination and some memory and some reason; but with one, the imagination is his most prominent and strongest quality; with another, the reason; with another, the memory. What we need to do is to cultivate that kind of love for God in which we find ourselves lacking. If we love God most with our hearts, let us try to deepen in us the sense of sin, the realization of personal responsibility, and so love God more with our souls. If we love God most with our minds, let us try to deepen in us the feeling of reverence, the habit of worship, the attitude of adoration, and so love God more with our hearts" (George Hodges).

"The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Jesus added. These two commandments are given in the Old Testament, the first one in Dt. 6.4, 5, the second in Lev. 19.18. Jesus brought them together, showing that the one is the complement of the other, that there is none other commandment greater than these. "In reality they are twin commandments; and so closely are they connected that they cannot exist, or, at all events, they cannot have a healthy existence, apart" (James Stalker). James (2.8) calls the second "the royal law." Ordinarily we use the word *neighbor* to indicate one who lives near us; brother would, accordingly, be a better word here, in the sense that all men are brothers. We are to love our neighbor as ourself, "not in the same degree, but after the same manner, that is, freely and readily, sincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and perseveringly."

Love of a neighbor is but a proof of love of God. He who loves God necessarily loves his neighbor. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar," wrote John: "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loves his brother also."

The engineer who wishes to know how much water there is in the boiler does not go into the engine-room and look into the boiler itself, but he looks at the gauge, the small glass tube on the outside of the boiler, and he knows that the water is just as high within the boiler as it is within the tube. If the tube is empty, the boiler is empty. Our treatment of our neighbor is the gauge which shows how our love of God stands. If there is no love shown toward our neighbor, there is no real love for God.

As Dr. James Stalker says, the reply of Jesus lifted the scribe off his feet, and caused him to disassociate himself from his fellow scribes, and to acknowledge with enthusiasm his appreciation of it as he cried, "Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said." The Greek word *kalos,* translated *well,* means literally *beautifully,* and gives the idea of complete satisfaction with the reply. "Thou hast well said that God is one; and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

"Do you think the majority of Christian people have adequately wakened up to the fact that they are called upon to worship God with their intelligence? Have we realized that God is to be loved not with the heart only, but also with the mind? Here is science bravely and uninterruptedly prepared to spend time and brains to any extent on the inquiry into the structure of the physical world; every new step towards the surprising of Nature's secrets is greeted with a thrill of exalted gratitude. Are we not going to exert ourselves with equal keenness to interpret God, to take in the whole meaning of Jesus Christ? Surely we have to catch on our minds, not the lowest form of belief compatible with a profession of Christianity, but something of the incredible wonder of him who has ransomed us.

"How do men make advance in other fields? By brooding over the subject-matter till gradually the new paths of knowledge open out before the kindling

mind. And we, too, must be sometimes alone if we ever are to brood over the Gospel that has saved us" (Hugh Ross Mackintosh).

"Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God," then said Jesus. The man had grasped the great conception of the law of love, the nature of the soul's relationship of Christ to the Kingdom. He was not far from the Kingdom, but not in.

"And though not far, a man may yet be never in. Just as a ship that has buffeted the oceans of half a globe may be wrecked on the last night when the passengers are making up their baggage, and perish almost in sight of home, so there are men who come very near Christ and then drift away and never have the same holy contiguity again. It is a solemn thing to be not far from the Kingdom. It is a great responsibility. May it be ours to make it also a great reward" (W. M. Mackay).

No man after that durst ask him any questions. His enemies retired from the contest consciously defeated. "Why did that next interrogation about some detail of the ritual law die on the questioner's lips, ashamed of its own utterance? Does not the explanation lie here?—Jesus had led them when they were least expecting it into the presence of something in religion so great that for the first time their querulous questions died out. They supposed they had been talking about religion. Then Jesus talked about it—Love God with all your heart; love your neighbor as yourself—and in spite of their littleness they knew that that really was religion" (Harry Emerson Fosdick).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not! verse 14. Under the Herods the royal revenue seems to have been derived from crown lands, from a property and income tax, from import and export duties, and from a duty on all that was publicly sold or bought, to which must be added a tax upon houses in Jerusalem. Heavily as these exactions must have weighed upon a comparatively poor and chiefly agricultural population, they refer only to civil taxation, not to religious dues. But even so, we have not exhausted the list of contributions demanded of a Jew. For every town and community levied its own taxes for the maintenance of synagogue, elementary schools, public baths, the support of the poor, the maintenance of public roads, city walls and gates, and other general requirements.—Alfred Edersheim, in Sketches.

Whose is this image and superscription? verse 16. Throughout the Roman Empire the Cæsar claimed and received divine honors, save in Palestine alone. Caligula was the only Cæsar who attempted to force the Jews to worship his image. "Next to the worship of the Cæsar, his effigy on the coins and military standards was abhorrent to the Jews, and care was taken not to offend their prejudices on these points. It was impossible, however, to avoid the circulation in Judea of Roman denarii bearing the imperial 'image and superscription,' for no gold or silver money was coined in Palestine." On locally coined copper money, only the name of Cæsar and innocent emblems were to be seen, as shown in our illustration of a coin of Herod Antipas. The illustration of a denarius shows the image, the head, of Tiberius encircled by a laurel wreath and the abbreviated superscription in Latin.—Tiberius Cæsar the Son of the Deified Augustus himself Augustus.

A Denarius

One of the scribes, verse 28. Long before the time of our Savior, the law, written and oral, had become the absolute norm of Jewish life. Every detail of life, civil as well as religious, was regulated in the minutest manner by the law. It was impossible for the ordinary Jew to be fully acquainted with the innumerable statutes referring, e.g., to Levitical purity or the keeping of the Sabbath, and to apply them to the fresh cases that emerged daily; and yet his standing before God depended upon his scrupulous observance of these statutes. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that a special class of men should devote themselves expressly to the study of the law. These were the "scribes," "lawyers," or "doctors of law."—Hasting's Bible Dictionary.

What commandment is the first of all? verse 28. The rabbis had divided the law of Moses into three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions, as many as the days in the year; and two hundred and forty-eight commands, as many as the parts of the body, according to the Jewish reckoning. And among these six hundred and thirteen prohibitions and commands they distinguished greater and lesser ones. It was a great sin, for instance, not to keep the rules in regard to fringes and phylacteries or in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath, but an infringement of some lesser command could be overlooked.

The first great commandment which Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy was repeated by the Jews in their morning and evening prayers, was inscribed in the phylacteries which the Pharisees wore on their foreheads, and was enclosed in the Mezeuza, which was nailed to the doorposts.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What carping question had the scribes put to Jesus regarding the Sabbath law? Regarding washing of hands? How did the rich young ruler regard his neighbors? What took place on Sunday of Holy Week? What took place on Monday?

The Captious Questions

Matthew follows our last lesson with the three parables of The Two Sons, The Wicked Husbandman, and the Marriage Feast, all of which pronounced sure judgment upon the Pharisees and aroused them to the highest pitches of anger. They realized that it was necessary for them to ack quickly, for Jesus by his claims was drawing to himself the attention of the populace. It was customary to ask questions in public of Jewish rabbis, even to interrupt their discourse with questions, and the Pharisees plotted together to ask Jesus a question such that no matter how he answered it, his answer could be used against him. The Herodians asked their questions about the payment of tribute, the Sadducees theirs about the resurrection, and a Pharisee his question about the great commandment.

The Time and Place

It was in Jerusalem on Tuesday of Holy Week, the day on which Jesus gave his last public teaching. The plotters against Jesus came to him in the temple enclosure, probably in one of the porches, and propounded their questions.

When the Jews Petitioned to Render unto Cæsar the Things that Were Cæsar's

The Jews themselves petitioned Rome for Judea's annexation to the Roman province of Syria. Rome did not grant the petition immediately. Only after years of Archelaus' misrule in Jerusalem was he finally deposed and Judea annexed in 6 A. D. But why did fifty Jewish ambassadors prostrate themselves before the throne of Cæsar begging for annexation; why did the entire Jewish population of Rome support these ambassadors and oppose the claims of Herod's heirs? Where was Jewish patriotism, where the exclusive nationalism, clothed in all-consuming religious fervor?

Their supplications were dictated by austere and conservative religious nationalism. They felt that where the question was between so-called political independence and religion, then indeed it was their religion, as they understood it, their Jewish culture that they could not possibly sacrifice. If they should be managed by a Roman procurator, they hoped for complete cultural autonomy, and they expected to manage their own local affairs. Ruled by a Herodian prince, they were quite helpless to do so; for the Herodians, while nominally Jews, were striving hard to be culturally Romans. Complete independence looked to the more enlightened part of the population like a forlorn hope, and the struggle was waged for a home rule that would not infringe upon religious traditions.

Among the abuses of Herod, which the ambassadors quoted as reason for annexation, was that "He never stopped adorning the cities that lay in the neighborhood of the Gentiles, but that the cities belonging to his own government were ruined and utterly destroyed." In Samaria Herod built a very large temple to Cæsar, and with similar temples to Cæsar he filled Judea. He had a large Roman eagle made out of gold at vast expense and erected over the principal gate of the temple at Jerusalem. Since any kind of image was forbidden to Jews by the law and the prophets, that Roman eagle was not exactly cherished. When Herod's

health began to fail, the Jews started an agitation to remove from the temple the eagle which in their eyes was both a sacrilege and a national insult. The eagle was pulled down and cut to pieces by a number of young men, and Herod ordered all of them to be burned alive.

When in the course of time Herod died and Archelaus succeeded him, the people began to mourn the rebels whom Herod had burned. Let us quote Josephus: "The lamentations were very great, the mourning sober, and the weeping such as was loudly heard over all the city, as being for those men who had perished for the love of their country and for the temple. They cried out that a punishment ought to be inflicted for these men upon those that were honored by Herod." Not being able to appease the multitudes, Archelaus resorted to force. About three thousand Jews were slaughtered by his soldiers. It was this incident which led to a general uprising and an intervention of the Roman forces, and to the deputation from Jerusalem which petitioned annexation.

Interesting it is that the Jews themselves petitioned to be permitted to render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's for the sake of being free to give to their God what is God's.—Condensed from Toward the Understanding of Jesus, by Vladimer G. Simkhovitch.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Lord, who am I to teach the way
To little children, day by day,
So prone myself to go astray?
I teach them love for all mankind
And all God's creatures, but I find
My love comes lagging still behind.
Lord, if their guide I still must be
Oh, let the little children see
The teacher leaning hard on thee.—Leslie Pinckney Hill.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

LOVE, THE LAW OF THE KINGDOM

Beginning the Lesson

Sir William M. Ramsay is impressed by the fact, which many fail to notice, that in all the words of Jesus the truth stands out whole and entire. One never needs to make allowance for the circumstances nor the intention of the speaker. One does not feel that other points of view were left out of the account which, if considered, show the inadequacy of the statement. The word is never one-sided.

Take his famous saying of "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." We need not tarry to discuss the attempt of the Pharisees and Herodians to ensnare Jesus with their challenging question about the payment of tribute, the circumstances in which he made his pronouncement are very familiar to us all. Let us rather with the people "greatly marvel" at his skill in avoiding the dilemma and at the perfectness of his answer. There was nothing more to be said. Nothing could be added to it to make it more complete. It is final. Van Rourke, the historian, calls it the greatest of all the sayings of Jesus.

The High Way of Regarding Politics

Christianity is not perfectly grasped by us until we see that it has more than a private spiritual significance; it demands contact with a larger life than the merely personal.

Cæsar may represent force, but he also represents order, and therefore we render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. Are you to pay your taxes, and ask no questions forsooth, simply because a government represents order? Are you to take no account of whether a government is good or bad, whether a tax be just or unjust; are you simply to submit? Is this all that the Galilean has to teach us? Is this all that the application of the Christian spirit to politics means? It is not all; for there is a second, positive element in Christ's sayings, you are to render not only to Cæsar, but to God the things that are God's. Christ joins civic duty with moral and religious duty, and it is here that we discover the real subtlety of a reply which appears at first sight so almost childishly simple. The

man who renders to God the things that are his, unconsciously introduces into politics a higher meaning. There is a mean way of regarding politics and a high way; the mean way is to see in them nothing but human institutions; the high way is to see them as the vehicles of a divine force, by which the world is divinely governed. It is only the religious man who will ever look at politics in the latter way. It is only the man who has from his heart and conscience, with full integrity and sincerity, rendered unto God the things that are his, who will ever regard politics in a thoroughly high and noble spirit. And hence the need for religious men in political life, men who read their Bibles before they go to the House of Commons as Cromwell did, men who pray in their Cabinet Councils, as Lincoln did, men who present, as Lord Rosebery has put it, "that most formidable and terrible of all combinations, the practical mystic," combining all the energy of the man of action with close communion with the supernatural and celestial. We want saints in politics as well as theology; we want them even more in the political arena than the theological, and without such men politics will never rise above the realm of personal egotism, personal ambition, and party advantage.

To every young man I say, it is your duty to take the deepest interest in all that concerns your country, to judge and measure all the great movements of your time with intelligence and conscience, to interpret religion in a broad spirit, not as a personal perquisite of the soul, but as a living force, capable of operating in every department of life; to take your personal responsibility as a citizen, and not to delegate it to any governing class; but in thus acting you are only rendering unto God the things that are God's.—Condensed from a chapter in The Reproach of Christ, by W. J. Dawson.

The Greatest Law

Once we were going over the Grimsel Pass in Switzerland in a fog so thick that we could not see the horses that drew the tally-ho and, as people will in the weird unusualness of such a situation, we were talking in animated chatter, to cover our nervousness, about anything that came into our minds. Then suddenly on the crest of the pass, as though some omnipotent magician had waved his wand once, the fog vanished, not a shred left, clear sunshine and blue sky everywhere, and before us the whole Rhone Valley, with the great glacier like a silver scimitar cleaving the mountains in twain, and far away on every side, rank on rank, the receding peaks of snow. Our chatter died out in hushed and reverent awe. Nobody wanted to say anything. We were in the presence of something very great.

So I think of those scribes, befogged in their trivial disputes, when suddenly Jesus spoke and they stood abashed before a wide vision of religion's meaning. "No man after that durst ask him any question."

That thing is always happening to religion which happened to it in Jesus' day. It runs out from its main propositions and becomes absorbed in its corollaries. It entangles itself in trivialities. It starts with the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, faithfulness, but it ends by tithing mint, anise, and cummin. And then it has to be reformed. Only, a vital reformation is not well done by controversy. You cannot get at it negatively. The Master's way is the only constructive solution—lead men positively into the presence of something in religion so great, so redeeming, so beautiful, that central things become central. Unveil the mountains of religion, love to God and love to man, that men may see how small the hills are!—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.—George Washington.

2. "It is only in a community where there is profound respect for the things of God and devotion to ultimate matters of righteousness and justice that there can be real and vital respect for law."

3. He who loves his country more than mankind will very strongly tend to love his party more than his country and his class interests more than those of the community.—G. Stanley Hall.

4. Should ministers preach upon political issues?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Tell Isaiah's Parable of the Vineyard. (Is. 5.1-7.) 2. Name some messengers

who were sent to Israel and were badly treated or killed. 3. Give Stephen's words which arraign the Jewish nation as killers of the prophets. 4. What claims does Jesus make for himself in this parable? 5. What nations today have the ability, opportunity and responsibility of caring for God's vineyard?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

JESUS ANSWERS HIS CRITICS

Beginning the Lesson

About the time of the birth of Jesus, a Galilean named Judas went about preaching the doctrine that Jehovah was the only ruler of the Jews and it was sinning against him to pay tribute to a foreigner; the doctrine became very popular with a people steeped in hatred of their conquerors. They were the chosen people; freedom was theirs by right. "Shall we pay tribute to Cæsar or not?" was a question continually raised, and was equivalent to another question, "Shall we rise in rebellion?" With this burning question the Pharisees and Herodians came to Jesus. Did they honestly wish to have him settle it? How did they expect him to answer their questions?

How We May Render to Cæsar the Things that Are Cæsar's

When an Athenian youth attained the age that admitted him to the duties of citizenship, he took the Ephebic oath. Mayor Gaynor repeated its promises to the graduating class of the College of the City of New York one June, and the whole class held a special meeting a few days afterwards and subscribed to them as their program for their after lives as citizens. Here they are, and you will see that all American youth might well make the same promises:

"We will never bring disgrace to this our city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks.

"We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many.

"We will revere and obey the city's laws, and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those above us who are prone to annul and set them at naught.

"We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty; that thus, in all these ways, we may transmit this city, not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

How Jesus Answered the Question of the Scribe

See Explanations and Comments.

We Love God Because He First Loved Us

Jesus made it possible for every one to love God, for he has taught us that God himself is love, that we may think of him as a Father, and he has shown in his own life what God must be, a divine Being who loves and cares for every one. It is with many as with the little boy who thought the minister was a great man, too great to notice him, and was so afraid of him that when he saw him coming in the distance he would turn around so as not to meet him. The minister made an effort to get acquainted with that lad, and the two became great friends. One day the minister said, "Tell me, George, do you love me?" Eagerly the boy answered, "Yes, indeed I do." "But, George, there was a time when you did not, when you would run away from me. How long is it since you have loved me?" The boy thought awhile and then said, "Ever since I knew that you loved me." As long as we fear God as a great and terrible Being we do not love him; it is only when we realize that he loves us that our hearts go out in love to him. We love, because he first loved us.

What Proves One's Love for God

In Dr. Henry van Dyke's Legend of Service an angel reports to the Lord that he has found in the city Lupon three men renowned as saints of God: One of them is very wise; another is a great orator; a third has no special gifts nor graces but is a doer of good deeds. And he concludes:

> With three such saints Lupon is trebly blest;
> But, Lord, I fain would know, who loves thee best?

In answer the Lord proposes a test. Here it is:

Thou shalt go to Lupon, to the three
Who serve me there, and take this word from me:
Tell each of them his Master bids him go
Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow;
There he shall find a certain task for me:
But what, I do not tell to them nor thee.
Give thou the message, make my word the test,
And crown for me the one who answers best.

At the pulpit steps the angel met Benol, the great preacher, and delivered his message. "Benol's face went white as death" and slowly he looked around and whispered "Why?"

With a sigh the angel passed on to the home of Malvin, the sage, and gave him the same message. Malvin received it with surprise and sorrow, thought of the dangers, and muttered, "How?"

With fading hope the angel hastened on till he met Fermor, "hurrying cheerful down the street," and once more delivered the Lord's command. Eagerly the answer came "When?" Then

The angel's face with inward joy grew bright,
And all his figure glowed with heavenly light;
He took his golden circlet from his brow
And gave the crown to Fermor; answering, "Now!
For thou hast met the Master's bidden test,
And I have found the man who loves him best.
Not thine, or mine, to question or reply
When he commands us, asking how or why;
He knows the cause; his ways are wise and just,
Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust."

A Kaffir Sermon on This Topic

In a periodical whose name has escaped me, a long sermon from a native Kaffir preacher was translated from the German. To understand it we must know that in those churches every Christian receives a "token" which he carries with him, which shows that he is in the protection of a missionary. Here it is in part.

Give to God what belongs to God. Do we do that? You there with the red blanket, do you give to God what belongs to God? No, you come sometimes on Sundays here to the service and then go away to serve idols. You do not give to God what belongs to God. You must be converted and baptized, but that you will not do. Until you do it, we can do nothing with you. But you others, how is it with you? Do you give to God what belongs to God? You have been baptized. So the Lord Jesus has given to you a token for Heaven. There it stands written: "This man has been baptized in my name. I have bought him with the price of blood. He belongs to me; and he shall go to Heaven and be happy there." This token you have in your pocket, but how is it in your life? Do you live as it fits one who has been baptized and who would go to Heaven? You, Peter, there; have you stolen a sheep? And you, Jack, you have gotten at the brandy and have drunk until it was shameful. How does that agree with the token which you carry in your pocket?

Sentence Sermons

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's.—Shakespeare.

It is vain to imagine you can let God's love flow in, if you cannot let it flow out.—Horace Bushnell.

When we climb to heaven, 'tis on the rounds of love to men.—Alice Cary.

Whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens.—Webster.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What took place on the last Sunday of Jesus' life? 2. What took place on Monday? 3. On Tuesday morning early? 4. Who was the husbandman in our parable? The servants? The son? 5. Where in the Bible is Jesus called "the heir"? (Bible Concordance.) 6. Where in the Bible is the quotation in verse 42 found? (See footnote of your Bible.) 7. What do we owe God?

LESSON IX—MAY 27

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

GOLDEN TEXT: Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous
But the way of the wicked shall perish.
Psalm 1.6

LESSON Mark 12.1-12; 13.1-37 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 1

MARK 12.1 And he began to speak unto them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard. 3 And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and handled shamefully. 5 And he sent another; and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6 He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard. 9 What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 Have ye not read even this scripture:

The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner;
11 This was from the Lord,
And it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them: and they left him, and went away.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN, verses 1-8. This is the parable which Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. A man planted a vineyard and provided it with all things necessary for the making of wine, protected it with a hedge and watch tower and dug a pit for the winepress. Recall the question of the owner in Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard: "What could have been done more?" This Song was well known to the enemies of Jesus, and when Jesus began in this way they undoubtedly recalled it and its direct condemnation of the leaders of the people of Isaiah's time, and knew that Jesus was about to utter a condemnation of themselves.

Then the lord of the vineyard let it to husbandmen and went away. (Possibly it may be necessary to explain to pupils that the husbandmen were the farmers. One pupil when asked the meaning of the word said they were the married men.) When the season of fruits came round he sent one servant after another to collect what was due him, but the husbandmen beat one, badly treated another, killed a third; in like manner they treated yet other servants whom he sent. "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?" Stephen cried to the mob which soon stoned him; "and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One." "Jesus treats the whole long series of violent rejections as the acts of the same set of husbandmen. The class or nation was one, as a stream is one, though all its particles are different, and the Pharisees and scribes were the living embodiment of the spirit which animated all the past" (Alexander Maclaren).

"The terrible nemesis of evil is that it ever tends to reproduce itself in aggravated forms. Think of the influence of habit; the searing of conscience, so that we become able to do things that we would have shrunk from at an earlier stage. Remember how impunity leads to greater sin. So here the first servant is merely sent away empty, the second is wounded, the third is killed. All evil is an inclined plane, a steady, downward progress."

At last the owner sent his son. His own Son, Jesus, whom he appointed heir of all things, Heb. 1.2. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. How great is the claim which Jesus here makes! The prophets he calls servants; he himself is the beloved Son of God. "They will surely reverence my son," said the owner in Christ's parable. "This he said, not as if they would do so, for he knew they would not, but pointing out what they ought to do" (Euthymius, quoted by Dummelow). But the husbandmen said one to another, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and take his inheritance." To this they all agreed. They

took him and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard. Note how calmly certain Jesus was of the fate awaiting him.

II. THE RETRIBUTION, verse 9. "What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do?" Jesus questioned. "He will come and destroy the husbandman, and will give the vineyard unto others." Thus Jesus here answers his own question, but in Matthew 21.41, the rulers themselves answer: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons."

III. THE KEYSTONE, verses 10, 11. Have ye not read even this scripture (Ps. 118.22, 23):

> The stone which the builders rejected,
> The same was made the head of the corner?

"In the Psalm the 'stone' is the Jewish nation, rejected and despised by the Gentiles during the captivity, but after the return restored to a place of honor among the nations of the earth. But on the principle that what he said of Israel applies especially to the Messiah, the rabbis interpreted the passage Messianically. Rabbi Salomo on Micah 5.1 said: 'It is the Messiah, the Son of David, of whom it is written, The stone which the builders rejected, etc.'" (Dummelow).

Though conscious that his death was near at hand, Jesus never once doubted the result of his work here on earth. His final victory was assured. "Jesus is not one fine stone along with the rest, Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet. He is the Keystone, different in kind from the rest. His place is at the top." "Though Jesus foretells his death, he also foretells his triumph after death. How could he have spoken, almost in one breath, the prophecy of his being slain and 'cast out of the vineyard,' and that of his being exalted to the very apex and shining summit of the true Temple, unless he had been conscious that his death was indeed not the end, but the center, of his work, and his elevation to universal and unchanging dominion?" (Alexander Maclaren).

Two columns bearing this inscription were once raised in Spain: "Erected in honor of the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, who extirpated the name of Christian." The columns have long since disappeared, but the name of Christian has been extended throughout the world. The Sanhedrin thought that when they put Jesus to death they would put an end to his teaching, but the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner.

The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen as given by Matthew (21.33-46) ends with these words: "Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." In this figure Christ, the "stone," is represented as falling on one who opposes him or rejects him, and encompassing that one's destruction. It is a figure of divine judgment. The stone becomes a dangerous stumbling-block to those who reject it as the foundation stone of their lives.

As Dr. Alexander Maclaren comments: "National responsibilities are not to be slipped out of by being shifted on the broad shoulders of governments or influential men. Who lets them have governments and influential men? 'Guv'ment ain't to answer for it, God will send the bill to you.'"

IV. THE EFFECT UPON THE PHARISEES, verse 12. By this parable Jesus recalled the long-continued rebellion of Israel, asserted his divine Sonship, and foretold the doom of the nation. The chief priests and Pharisees perceived that it was spoken against them. They knew themselves accused. They saw that the owner of the vineyard was God, the vineyard was God's Kingdom in Israel, the servants sent to collect what was due him were his messengers—the prophets, whom the nation had ill-treated and killed, the Son was the Messiah, whom they were determined to put to death. In their anger they would have seized and slain him then had they not feared the multitudes who believed Jesus to be a prophet. They sinned against light.

"It is much the same today. Many listen long to the truth before it comes

home. We generalize and criticize, and forget that the gospel message is direct, definite and personal. Usually we are bad judges of our own portrait, and are especially slow to recognize the moral portrait when it is accurate and unflattering, and, in addition, we have no sincere desire to know our true selves. We need to cry with the disciples 'Lord, is it I?' The great problem is to rescue ourselves from the mass, to realize our personal relation to God, his truth, and his kingdom" (W. L. Watkinson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And digged a pit for the winepress, verse 1. The winepress was always in the vineyard itself, as the ripe grapes would not without loss bear carriage to any distance. So numerous are these winepresses, that in the course of one day's explorations on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel I discovered eleven of them. They are very simple in structure, but unless destroyed by man, will remain while the world stands. A flat or gently sloping rock is selected. At the upper end a trough is cut deep at the lower part and four and a half by three and a half feet in length and breadth. Out of the same rock, and parallel to this trough, is cut out below it a shallower vat, about a foot in thickness of the native rock being left between the two. This segment of rock is perforated by two or three holes bored close to the bottom of the upper vat, so that when the grapes were pressed in the upper the juice streamed into the lower vat from which it was drawn off through another hole.—E. C. Tristram.

Egyptian Representation of a Vineyard and Wine-Press

And built a tower, verse 1. At the time of harvest all the fruit must be watched; in the vineyards, fig and apricot groves, and orange and melon gardens, watchmen are stationed night and day to watch from some prominent point for thieves. In vineyards it is common for small, rough towers of stone, or booths raised on posts, to be built to lift the watchman to a sufficient height to keep the whole ground in view; in other cases simple "booths" are made on a high part of the ground. In these latter whole families will at times take up their abode to protect their family property.—E. W. G. Masterman, in The Biblical World.

The Fruit of the Vineyard

That he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard, verse 2. Dr. Edersheim explains that there were three modes of dealing with land. According to one of these, the laborers employed received a certain portion of the fruits, and sometimes, at least, wages also. Sometimes the tenant paid money rent to the proprietor, or else he agreed to give the owner a definite amount of produce, whether the harvest had been good or bad. Such leases were given by the year or for life; sometimes the lease was even hereditary, passing from father to son.

Dr. Clarke refers to the time when this custom prevailed in England, and quotes from a book still preserved that shows how rent of an estate was paid in cows, sheep, pigs, fowl, eggs, and manual labor.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What parables have we studied? What was the lesson of each? What captious questions were put to Jesus on Tuesday of Holy Week, and how did he answer them?

The Time and Place

It is still the last Tuesday and the place is the temple. In this parable Jesus is not on the defensive but is boldly attacking his enemies.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS FROM THE LESSON

"They got what was coming to them, all right," a boy exclaimed after listening to the teaching of this parable. His teacher had made him think and pass judgment upon an act of another. So far so good. But he must be made to go still farther in his thoughts, even as Jesus made the scribes. When Jesus had finished, his hearers perceived that he spoke of them. That is a mark of the Great Teacher. The boy should be led to think, "And I'll get what's coming to me if I do so and so." There was always a home-thrust somewhere in the parables of Jesus. His teaching was intensely personal. He spoke directly to the conscience. The Gospel message is always a direct message. Its lessons are not only for Smith and Jones and Brown, but for you and for me. The boy need not utter his thought—I'll get what's coming to me if—but the teaching should leave with him that thought. Adults like to discuss the sins of certain husbandmen of old. The truth should be brought home to their day and generation, and they should see their own responsibility for the mismanagement or theft of the property of others, and the way in which they themselves may be rejecting the Lord.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MISUSE OF NATIONAL PRIVILEGE

Beginning the Lesson

God has a right to look for the fruits of righteousness from individuals and nations. Jesus taught this by a parable whose lesson is so evident that even his enemies perceived its meaning. (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

The Son is Different from the Servants

If you can picture to yourself a father who has sent message after message to his wilful boy, assuring him of love, and begging, tempting, commanding his obedience; if you can think of him at last, when all of them have failed, gathering up all the affection and majesty of his fatherhood and going himself, that with the look of his own eye and the outreach of his own hand he might bear living witness of that which no messenger could tell, then you can feel the difference which Jesus means to describe. It is the everlasting difference between selfhood and its power, as distinguished from the closest and most intimate of messengers. A being's knowledge or authority that being may impart to a servant, and that servant may communicate. But a being's self can be handed over to no hired stranger, however loyal and obedient and devoted he may be. There is a mystery and depth of power in a man's self which is all his own.

Now try to state to yourself what was the distinction that Jesus drew between himself and the prophets that had come before him, and you will find, I am sure, that it lies just here. They brought God's messages; he brought God's Self. They revealed God's plans; he opened God's heart. They told men what God wanted; he showed men what God is. That inner, incommunicable soul of selfhood which none can manifest but he whose it is—nay, none save he who is it—that was what Jesus came to show men concerning God, and it was his power and prerogative to show that which he declared when he said that he was different from all that came before him; that while they were the servants he was the Son of God.

If we believe what Jesus said about himself, and earnestly desire to receive him and to treat him according to the nature which he declared and claimed for himself, does it not seem very clear that it is as the Son of God, not as the servant of God, that he must be received? Not as another Moses with a purer law, not as a new Isaiah with a loftier inspiration, but as one who in a different way brings us the very life and heart and nature of God himself; therefore not only with intelligent docility, but with adoring love, with loving adoration—so he is to be received.—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

An Abused Trust

The vineyard is the entire nation and church. It belongs to another. It is a precious thing. It is an object of care, being protected, cultivated, developed. It is capable of yielding rich fruitage, and provision is made to that end. That such results may be attained, men of training and ability are entrusted with the task of development. Instead of rejoicing in their trust and finding their reward in the fruitage of their labor, they claim the vineyard for their own and exploit it in their own interest. When reminded of their responsibility, they become abusive and aggressive. When brought face to face with supreme authority, they defy it and stain their hands with blood.

The crime of an abused trust is unspeakably wicked. When it is a trust involving the soul of a nation and the life and honor of the church of God, it is so base as to rouse the indignation of the Almighty.—Record of Christian Work.

The Jewish Nation Rejected Her King

The Jewish nation has rejected the fulfillment of her own dream. She has given a king to the world, and she has refused to crown him. I have read in one of George Macdonald's novels of a born-blind lamp-lighter. He illuminated the city at night; but he had no sense of what he was doing. So has it been with this land of Palestine. She has presented the King to the world; she has heard the plaudits of the spectators; and she has refused to join in them. In all history there is nothing so unique. It is the enemies of this land that have crowned her World-King; it is the Gentiles that have come to his light. The lamp-lighter has been blind to the beauty of that throne which he illuminated. Palestine has lighted up the scene; she has listened to the crowd shouting their applause and she has wondered why. She has been like a deaf-mute in a concert room. She has struck by accident the notes of a harp, and by accident they have burst into music. The audience has cheered the performance to the echo; but the performer knows not her triumph.—George Matheson.

How Is It with the Great Nations of the World Today?

A loyal Britisher asks, "May not the same folly be repeated by our own nation, and the same fate be provoked? Macaulay's New Zealander from the broken arch of London Bridge sketching the ruins of St. Paul may contain a moral that the brilliant historian did not perhaps intend. Will England in coming ages have a 'wailing place' where it will weep over its forfeited glory, as the modern Jew amid the ruins of Jerusalem bewails the humiliation of his faithless nation?"

National Privilege Misused and Sentenced

If a mere man had spoken this parable, we might admire the magnificent audacity of such an accusation. But the Speaker is more than man, and we have to recognize the judicial calmness and severity of his tone. Israel's history, as it draped itself before his pure eyes and perfect judgment, was one long series of divine favors and of human ingratitude, of ample preparations for righteous living and of no result, of messengers sent and contumelious rejection.

The last point of the parable is the authoritative sentence on the evil-doers. If anything could have enraged the rulers more than the parable itself, the distinct declaration of the transference of Israel's prerogatives to more worthy tenants would do so. The words are heavy with doom. They carry a lesson for us. Stewardship implies responsibility, and faithlessness, sooner or later, involves deprivation. The only way to keep God's gifts is to use them for his glory. "The grace of God," says Luther somewhere, "is like a flying summer shower." Where are Ephesus and the other apocalyptic churches? Let us "take heed lest, if God spared not the natural branches, he also spare not us."—Alexander Maclaren.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The capitalist's right to his own with interest.
2. The misuse of trust funds.
3. The claims of Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What makes us think that Judas left the Upper Room before the institution of the Last Supper? 2. What did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body . . . This is my blood"? 3. Why did Jesus want the three disciples near him in

Gethsemane? 4. What did Jesus mean by praying, "Remove this cup from me"? 5. How was his prayer answered? 6. If you knew that death awaited you tomorrow, how would you prepare for it?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PLAYING FAIR WITH GOD

Beginning the Lesson

One Christmas evening in Hangchow College, China, the boys gave tableaux and short plays, the finest of all being their enactment of the Parable of the Husbandmen, as a missionary reports the evening entertainment.

The parable was first read from the Bible and then it was acted reverently and powerfully, with truly oriental setting.

First, there was a landlord, old and gray, with a fine, long, flowing beard. He called in a steward and ordered him to take measures to purchase the best piece of land in the country, where some day there would be planted the finest vineyard the people had ever seen. The steward went out and posted up placards advertising his master's wish to buy land. Then came various offers of sale and the investigation of the soil. At last the purchase was made. Suddenly the master had some sad news which required him to go, with his wife and only son, to a far country. Then the workmen in the vineyard were called and the arrangements were made for giving to him in the future his share of the grapes.

Later, in the far country, the old master orders his steward to send a servant to the vineyard. While he is on the way the head husbandman calls a confederate to him, and tells him he has received a letter from his master ordering him to have ready his share of the profits that when the messenger arrives he be not delayed. They read the letter and together conspire to send the messenger empty away. When the messenger arrives he is received with full oriental courtesy, but in a manner that shows evil intentions. At last a quarrel ensues in which some pretty sharp fighting takes place on the stage, including some very fine fencing with swords, and at last the messenger is wounded and kicked out of the house. When the master receives him and sees his wounds, he can hardly believe his eyes and declares that the messenger has acted in this way so as to keep the profits for himself and make his wounds a pretense for not bringing the money. So he sends other servants, and some are beaten and some are killed.

At last, in a beautiful scene, the father calls his only son to him and tells him that though the messengers were cruelly dealt with, the workmen would not dare touch him. The difference between a son of a family among the gentry and an ordinary messenger is well brought out in Chinese life. An ordinary man in China is held rather cheaply, but a member of a family of rank and power is entirely a different thing, and the father naturally believes that the laborers of his vineyard, while despising and imposing upon men of their own low rank, would not despise his son. The son is sent after a most touching farewell, is received with a semblance of courtesy, and after declaring his purpose, is slain, though his faithful attendants do what they can to fight for him, and are slain with him.

The next scene is of the old father, who refuses to believe at first that his son is dead, and who, when he is finally convinced, is broken down with uncontrollable grief. The grief of the father was wonderfully given, with true feeling which moved all the onlookers. The final scene was when the father, who is a man of official rank, calls on the wicked husbandmen for judgment. At first they are threatened with death, but finally sentenced to imprisonment for life, in order to reveal the mercy of God and give them time for repentance.

God Sent His Son

I toss from the pier where I am comfortably seated a life preserver to a man struggling and strangling in the waves. The drowning man grasps it and is saved. His gratitude rightly equals the benefit received—his life saved, plus my sacrifice, which is nil. A poor grandmother with bedimmed eyes and rheumatic fingers knits a pair of winter mits for her society grandchild, who, receiving them, tucks them away in his wardrobe, food for moths. His gratitude should equal his benefit, which is less than nothing, plus the sacrifice of his grandmother. Adding these two typical illustrations, we conclude that the right-hand members of gratitude's equation are the sacrifice of the giver and the benefit of the receiver. Sacrifice and benefit kindle the emotions. E-motion is motion out. The greater the sacrifice and benefit, the larger the motion out of gratitude in works and words.

God's sacrifice of his only begotten Son, who tabernacled in the flesh and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," pales all other sacrifices into insignificance. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God's infinite sacrifice, plus our infinite benefit, calls for infinite gratitude. We respond in our thanks going out to him in abundant service.

Being Fair with God

The girl had run over to Miss Lucy's with her grievance. The little red house under the big elms was a clearing house for grievances for all East Winthrop.

"I suppose," the girl ended, "you'll think I'm very dreadful, but I'm going to say it right out: I don't—think—God—is fair." In spite of herself her voice broke on that last word; she hadn't realized that it would sound so dreadful said out. She looked, half frightened, at Miss Lucy, but Miss Lucy was knitting quietly.

"Are you sure," she asked, "that Rebecca Potter is fair? It seems to me I'd begin with that first."

"I've prayed and prayed," the girl answered defiantly.

"What kind of prayers?"

"Why"—the girl faltered and then laughed a little, "I guess I've tried every kind, one after the other. It doesn't sound like faith, I know, but, Miss Lucy, how does one get faith?"

"I wasn't talking of faith just now—I was talking of fairness," Miss Lucy answered. "You said God wasn't fair, and I asked if Rebecca Potter was. Do you think it is fair to ask and beg and complain, and not say 'thank you' for what we have?"

"I don't know what I have to be thankful for," said Rebecca Potter.

"How about a strong body and a good brain and clever hands and a pretty face and enough to eat and drink and wear, and friends and things to do?"

"But I've always had those things—people ought to have those things."

"Without saying 'thank you' for them?"

Rebecca was silent. Miss Lucy put down her knitting and laid a wrinkled hand over the strong young brown ones.

"Begin by just being fair, child," she said. "For everything you ask or cry out about, stop and thank God for one of your happy things. No one who is 'fair' to God will ever complain that God is not fair to him."—Forward.

Some Ways of Passing on God's Gifts to You

Whatever your age, you have some blessing given to you fresh each morning from God. Pass it on.

Is it youth with its strength and lightheartedness? Do not keep it for the ball field. Give your tired mother some of it in a hearty kiss and tender word, or such gentle help as you can render. Do not disdain to brighten the breakfast table with school gossip and jokes. It will cheer your father all day to feel that his boy takes him into his young life. Let everyone who comes near you be the happier because you are young and happy.

Or, you have a sweet voice and a talent for music? Do not keep them for display, that they may bring you applause. Sing at home, or in church, or beside lonely and neglected children, or wherever your music will carry comfort or peace.

You are, perhaps, a professed servant of Christ. You ponder long upon your sins. You read your Bible. You pray morning and night. You go to church. You are intent on saving your soul. But what help do you give to the souls of your brothers? God does not give you water of life to be thrown upon the ground. Pass it on!—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

God's goodness hath been great to thee,
Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.—Shakespeare.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the account of the Last Supper in all the Synoptic Gospels. 2. Why did each disciple ask, "Is it I"? 3. What did Jesus mean by saying, "He that dippeth with me in the dish"? 4. What was "the cup" of verse 36? 5. What petition in the Lord's Prayer is recalled by the prayer in Gethsemane?

LESSON X—JUNE 3

JESUS FACING BETRAYAL AND DEATH

GOLDEN TEXT: Not what I will, but what thou wilt. Mark 14.36

LESSON Mark 14.1-42 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 22.1-5, 18, 19

MARK 14.17 And when it was evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and were eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me, *even* he that eateth with me. 19 They began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? 20 And he said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, he that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 For the Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. 23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

32 And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. 34 And he saith unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BETRAYAL, verses 17-21. See The Historical Background. As Jesus and his twelve disciples were eating the paschal supper, Jesus suddenly said, "Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me, even he that eateth with me." With great amazement the disciples heard this startling prophecy. One of them, one of that little band whose lives had been so closely united with their Lord's, was to be guilty of so infamous a treachery!

"Is it I?" one by one they questioned. The form of the Greek implies a negative answer, as if each one said, "Surely it is not I!" "Who hath sailed about the world of his own heart, sounded each creek, surveyed each corner, but that there still remains therein much *terra incognita* to himself?" Thomas Fuller quaintly asks. The mood of the disciples was not that of self-sufficiency. They did not indignantly deny the charge, nor passionately affirm their loyalty. Nor did they ask, "Is it Judas?" "Is it Andrew?" Each with bated breath murmured, "Is it possible that it is I?"

This is the right attitude for every follower of Christ. Let us read all of our Lord's words in this spirit, asking ourselves what they mean for us, how they apply to us.

"It is one of The Twelve, he that dippeth with me in the dish," Jesus added. The dish was the one containing the sauce of bitter herbs. See Light from Oriental Life. No doubt all were doing this, and the words only emphasized the treachery of the betrayer. To John, Jesus indicated that it was Judas, Jn. 13.26. "For the Son of man goeth [to his death] even as it is written of him." The cross was not an accident: the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. "But woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." The last sentence is a proverbial expression for the most terrible destiny, "forbidding the thought of any deliverance, however remote." "Dante's estimate of the turpitude of Judas' crime—he places the betrayer in the lowest depths of the Inferno—is probably a truer expression of the horror of his deed felt by the unsophisticated conscience than are the modern attempts to explain away his guilt" (Wm. A. Grist).

"Jesus feels the awful contrast between the betrayer and the Betrayed. For himself, he goeth as it is written of him. This phrase admirably expresses the co-operation of divine purpose and free human will; and by the woe that follows he refutes all who would make of God's fore-knowledge an excuse for human sin" (Expositor's Bible).

II. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, verses 22-25. As they were eating, Jesus took unleavened bread that had been especially prepared for the paschal feast, and after offering a blessing broke it into pieces and gave to his disciples. "Blessed is he who giveth the bread of earth" was the usual blessing. Because he broke the bread, our ordinance of The Lord's Supper is sometimes called "The Breaking of Bread." As he gave the bread to the disciples he said, "Take ye: this is my body." That is, this represents my body. In like manner we say of a portrait, "This is my friend." Jesus spoke in Hebrew or Aramaic, and in that language, Adam Clarke informs us, there is no term which expresses means, signifies, denotes, hence the Hebrews used a figure of speech and said "it is" for "it signifies." There is scarcely any figure more common than this in every language.

"O lead my blindness by the hand,
Lead me to thy familiar feast,
Not here or now to understand,
Yet even here and now to taste
How the Eternal Word of Heaven
On earth in broken bread is given"
(William E. Gladstone).

And he took a cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them. From the Greek word *eukaristesas,* thanks, our word *Eucharist* has been derived. And they all drank of it. Was Judas among the number? The Gospels do not tell us, but the natural inference is that Judas left before the instituting of the Last Supper. John records the Passover Supper only, and he records the giving of the sop to Judas and his going out, Jn. 13.26-30.

And he said unto them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." That is, the wine in the cup represents my blood. Because Paul says in First Corinthians (10.16), "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" the sacrament is also called "The Communion." With the expression "blood of the covenant" compare Ex. 24.8, where Moses sprinkled blood upon the people and said, "Behold, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you." Similarly, Jesus declares that his blood is poured out to ratify a covenant, or agreement of forgiveness, between God and the many. The graphic present, is poured out, is used because the sacrificial death is close at hand. Many here is not opposed to *all* or even to *few.* "The thought is simply of the difference between the one who died and those who are benefited by his death. His blood is shed for more than one, for the community at large" (James Moffatt).

"How much unworthiness there was in those disciples! skeptical Thomas; Peter, rash and weak; John with his passion; and all of them with a spot of cowardice in their hearts, which was so soon to blacken in the fierce light which beat upon them. But the Master, looking beyond their faults and regarding the bright possibilities of each, invited them to this closest fellowship. And they all drank of it. So let it be now. If Christ received only perfect ones to his table, he would sit there alone; but he receives sincere souls, whatever may be their faults" (W. L. Watkinson).

"Verily I say unto you, I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."

"'We shall drink the cup again,' he said to his disciples—and what a superb confidence it showed—'new in the Kingdom of God.' And still through the feast Christ speaks to his disciples of the 'good time coming.' We get wearied and discouraged in our Christian services, sometimes. Things move slowly. Sin and vice retain their terrible power. But every time we eat of the bread and drink of the cup Christ says to us, 'Be ye stedfast, unmovable; faint not, nor fall; we shall drink of the fruit of the vine new in the Kingdom of God.'" (J. D. Jones).

III. THE DEPARTURE FROM JERUSALEM; PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD, verses 26-31.

IV. THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE, verses 32-42. Upon reaching the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus left the group of disciples and went on farther with Peter, James and John. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye

here and watch," he said to the disciples upon whom he leaned most. How clearly his humanity discloses itself here! He craved human companionship and sympathy in his hour of great need. What could they do for him? They could watch. They could warn him of the approach of his enemies so that he would not be taken unawares. They could keep fellowship with him in prayer. They could sustain him in his agony by their mere sympathetic presence.

"Everyone knows how terrible is suffering in loneliness. The solitary watch in the night hours often becomes a terror to the strong and well. To those in pain it is like an eternity of agony. We can face hard trial and suffering if only we feel the touch of a loving hand, and know that another shares the trial. This comfort was denied the suffering Savior" (Frank Johnson).

Going still farther on, Jesus fell on his face and prayed in anguish that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. By "if it were possible" Jesus meant if it were possible in accordance with the purpose which he came to earth to fulfill, for from that purpose he never swerved. He shrank from the cup of suffering.

"There is a simple hymn that we sometimes sing: 'I tell him all my doubts and griefs and fears.' That is perfect communion. If there is one thing God hates, it is to hear a song about resignation when the heart is hot and rebellious. In such hours he would far rather hear about our doubts and fears. Here the supreme picture is that of the Son of man telling God of the shrinking of his own soul, and of his acquiescence in the divine will. That is communion with God!" (G. Campbell Morgan).

"Abba, Father," Jesus cried. *Abba* is the Aramaic word, and *Father* is the translation of the Greek word, both having the same meaning. Perhaps Mark added the Greek word in explanation for his readers who did not understand Aramaic, but many scholars believe that both words were used by Jesus, and explain the double title as the utterance of deep feeling. Luther in his translation has "dear Father." "Strong feeling is apt to express itself in reduplicating terms; and in the case of those accustomed to speak at times an acquired tongue, it is the fond vernacular that springs first to the lips in moments of agitated feeling."

"Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee," Jesus prayed; "remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." That was the great condition; he asked not to have his own will if it were not also the Father's will.

"That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in dragging the passionate desire into still submission, the anxious, tumultuous expectation into silent surrender, is not true prayer" (F. W. Robertson).

On returning to the three disciples, Jesus found them asleep. To Peter he said reproachfully, "Couldest thou not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And then with tender compassion he added, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

A second and a third time Jesus prayed, and each time returned to find the disciples sleeping. "Sleep on, now, and take your rest," he said to them at last: the time for watching was over, for the hour was at hand when he should be betrayed.

Jesus came from the struggle calm and confident, his will and his Father's will had become one. Calmly he bade his disciples arise and go with him to meet the betrayer.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame" (Sidney Lanier).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He that dippeth with me in the dish, verse 20. Knives, forks and spoons were not in use; a bit of bread was dipped in the common dish containing a sauce of bitter herbs. Partaking of a common meal is an oriental pledge of fellowship. "It is hard for us to realize the infamy of one, according to oriental standards, who would betray a man with whom he had eaten," says an Eastern traveler. "An oriental host was entertaining a guest. Said he, 'When we wish to honor a guest

we do this,' and he detached a piece of roast mutton with his fingers and passed it to his guest, who took it with his fingers and ate it. 'Do you know what I have done?' questioned the host. 'You have given me a delicious piece of meat and I have eaten it.' 'Much more than that. By this act I have pledged you every drop of my blood, that while you are in my territory no evil shall come to you.'"

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many, verse 24. It was accounted necessary to the validity of a covenant in ancient days that it should be sealed by the shedding of blood. Thus, when the Greeks and the Trojans called a truce pending the single combat between Menelaus and Paris, they ratified it by a sacrifice.

The custom was universal. The heathen observed it, and so did Israel. And that we may understand the custom, we must consider what sacrifice originally signified. The blood was the life; and so its pouring forth before the altar was the offering up of the life to God. Properly it should have been the worshiper's own blood; and this was actually the primitive practise. A survival of it is seen in the story of the priests of Baal, who "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them."

Such was the primitive rite, but in process of time it was softened, and the worshiper brought a victim and slew it, and sprinkled its blood on the altar and on himself, signifying that thenceforth there was the bond of a common life between himself and his deity and thus they were in fellowship.

Such was the ritual of the Covenant of Blood; and our Lord employed that familiar institution in order to interpret the significance of his atoning Sacrifice. —Condensed from The Feast of the Covenant, by David Smith.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing Upon the Lesson

When were Peter, James and John favored beyond the other disciples?

Tuesday Evening of Holy Week

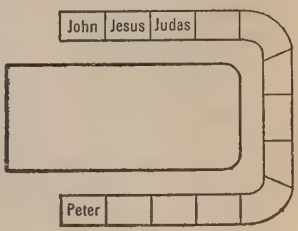
The thirteenth chapter of Mark records the leaving of the temple for the Mount of Olives, the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the lesson from the fig tree, and the enjoining of watchfulness. Matthew gives the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Judgment as uttered at this time.

Wednesday of Holy Week

Wednesday was probably spent at Bethany but we have no record of what happened on that day. Portions of the long discourse recorded in Jn. 14 to 16 may have been given then.

The Paschal Feast

It was late in the afternoon of Thursday when they reached the upper room where all things were in readiness for the Paschal Feast, the table already supplied with the lamb (although there is no mention made of this), the dish of bitter herbs, the thin cakes of unleavened bread, and the cups of wine. Probably before taking their places on the divan which surrounded the table on three sides, the disciples disputed once again as to who should be considered the greatest—and therefore entitled to the most honored seats. From the fact that Jesus handed the sop to Judas, and from the conversation that ensued which was heard by John alone, the order in which Jesus, John, Peter, and Judas reclined on the divan is thought to have been as our sketch from Hastings' Dictionary indicates.



Probable Positions at Table

After one of the cups of wine had been blessed and drunk by all present, it was customary for the head of the household celebrating to rise and wash his hands. Probably it was at this juncture that Jesus rose and securing a basin of water and girding himself with a towel began to teach the disciples a lesson of humility and of the greatness of service by washing their feet. Peter's remonstrance Jesus answered by saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," Peter eagerly returned. "Ye are clean, but not all," Jesus quietly observed, and later he openly declared: "Verily, verily

I say unto you, one of you shall betray me." "Lord, is it I?" questioned each one aloud, even Judas. "Surely it is not I!" their horrified looks explained. Peter leaned over to John and bade him question their Master, and John whispered in Jesus' ear, "Lord, who is it?" "He it is for whom I shall dip the sop and give it him," whispered Jesus in reply. Taking a bit of unleavened bread and dipping it in the dish of bitter herbs, he handed it to Judas. The others had not heard the question and answer, and they did not understand, and when Jesus dismissed the traitor, saying to him, "What thou doest, do quickly," they thought that Judas was sent forth on some errand. Jesus was now free from the presence of his betrayer, and he could speak freely with his friends.

After the Institution of the Last Supper

After the close of the paschal feast, when the third cup had been blessed and passed around, Jesus instituted the rite which we call the Last Supper, the Eucharist, the Holy Communion. "This day shall be unto you a memorial," the law of the Passover had been, and now Jesus said of his new rite which was to take the place of the Passover with his followers, "This do in remembrance of me."

Lovingly he talked with them. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you: whither I go, ye can not come." "Why not?" questioned Peter, and confidently asserted, "I will lay down my life for thee." "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." So much was yet to happen that night, so swiftly did one event follow upon another, that Peter seems to have forgotten his Lord's astounding prophecy when first his faithfulness was put to the test.

The Garden of Gethsemane Today

Now we may think of Jesus as uttering the beautiful words recorded by John in the fourteenth chapter: "Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you. I come again and will receive you unto myself." Thomas remonstrated that they knew not whither he was going, they knew not the way. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me," Jesus answered. Philip asked to be shown the Father. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" sadly Jesus questioned. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Continuing his discourse, Jesus sought to comfort his disciples and to prepare them for the future. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you."

Then followed that wonderfully beautiful prayer which John records in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel. The singing of the hymn followed—probably the 118th Psalm, one of the Psalms which were always sung at the Passover Feast—O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endureth forever.

"Arise, let us go hence," was Jesus' signal for departure. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, unto the Mount of Olives.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

If we sleep through the hour for duty, we may as well sleep on after the hour. Waking then will not avail to accomplish that which we were set to do.

There are many applications of this principle. Whatever we do for our pupils we must do when they need our help. If one is sick, the time to show our affection and our sympathy is while the sickness continues, and not after the pupil is well again.

If one of our pupils is passing through some sore struggle with temptation, and is in danger of being overcome, then is the time to come up close alongside of him, and put the strength of our love under his weakness to support him. If we fail him then, we may almost as well let him go on alone after that.

There is no use for the look-out on the ship to become vigilant only after the vessel is among the rocks. There is no use for the sentinel, in the time of war, to arouse and begin to watch when the enemy has stolen in and captured the field.—Adapted from the writing of J. R. Miller.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS"

Beginning the Lesson

A dozen years ago there was unearthed by the Arabs in Antioch, Syria, a large silver cup enclosed in a carved silver container which is now in the safety vault of a New York bank. The owners secured the services of an authority in archæological treasures, who is confident, after several years of careful study, that this "Chalice of Antioch" dates from the first century of our era. The inner cup closely resembles in shape the representations on the Arch of Titus, Rome, of cups among the spoils taken from the temple of Jerusalem in the year 70. Two central figures, on opposite sides of the Chalice, represent, it is believed, Christ in his youth and in his maturity. Above the latter figure is a dove, and underneath it an eagle resting on a basket containing loaves of bread. Vines with their clusters of grapes connect these figures with twelve others. It is natural to suppose the symbolism to be that of the Savior offering the bread and the wine, denoting his broken body and shed blood. The beautifully carved outer cup is cut out so as to show the plain inner one which it thus preserves and adorns, and the question has naturally arisen as to the possibility of this inner cup, which is so honored, being the very cup that Jesus used when he instituted the Lord's Supper. It has always been believed that the "Upper Room" where the supper was held was in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark. The cup might have fallen into his possession, and he might have carried it with him to Antioch when he went there from Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas, Acts 11.28, 30.

One Who Knew the Fellowship of His Sufferings

The broken body of the Lord Jesus given for us receives a striking illustration in the work and death of Livingstone. In the eighteen years of solitary travel in Africa he was worn out. Reduced by fever, starved, bereaved (the disablement by the lion's jaws was one of the lesser of his physical sufferings), a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he not only opened up Central Africa by his discoveries, but touched the imagination and heart of the world by his sufferings. It was his death that completed and crowned this breaking of his body for Africa. Borne in a litter to Chitambo's country, and laid in the hut at Ilala, he finished his course. On his knees he was found dead, arresting for ever the attention of the Church,

and challenging Christians to evangelize Africa. To make the breaking of his body perfect and manifest for all time, the heart was buried there in the center of the continent, and the body was brought by Susi and Chamah to the coast, and thence to the central shrine of the Anglo-Saxon world. Out of the broken body has sprung the evangelization of the Congo and of the Uganda; Livingstonia and the mission stations on Nyassa testify to it. It will work its miracles until all Africa is won to Christ.—Robert F. Horton, in The Expository Times.

Our Passover Also Hath Been Sacrificed, Even Christ

He instituted this memorial, not merely that he might be remembered, but that he might be remembered aright. This is the purpose and the use of the Holy Sacrament. Suppose it had been left to the Apostles to devise a memorial of their Master: what would they have chosen to remember him by? They would certainly have fixed upon some aspect of his ministry which had appealed to their imagination and excited their admiration. Probably they would have instituted a rite commemorative of his teaching or his miracles. I am very sure that it would never have entered into their minds to fix upon his death as the supremely memorable fact and devise a rite which should keep that before the thought and imagination of succeeding ages. His teaching and his miracles are indeed very memorable, but they do not constitute the supreme glory of our Lord. He is more than a philosopher and more, far more, than a wonder-worker. He is the Savior, and his supreme glory is his infinite sacrifice for the sin of the world, his life of vicarious obedience to the Father's will, and his death of suffering and shame which was the consummation of his life, the farthest reach of his redeeming love. And therefore, when he instituted his memorial, he fixed upon his death and said: "Remember me; and when you remember me, let it be for this—that I died for you. This bread is my body broken for you: take, eat. This cup is the New Covenant in my blood: drink ye all of it. This do in remembrance of me."—David Smith, in Man's Need of God.

The Bearing of this Sacrament upon our Everyday Life

There are many persons, who, whether from infrequent communions or from some ancient superstition that still lingers, have formed the habit of lifting the Lord's Supper out of connection with their everyday life. It is right that we should regard the memorial of facts so divine with more than usual seriousness of feeling, and that we should prepare for it with a very earnest discipline. But how many, who do this with all honesty as the feast comes round, fail to carry away from it any influence for the rest of their lives? Are we not all tempted to treat the Sacrament as a special and occasional means of grace, which demands from us at the time unusual adoration and effort to purify our hearts, but which has no practical effect upon the intervals of life between its celebrations?

I am the bread of life, he says as he hands us this bread. The bread of life does not mean what will stimulate us to a more than ordinary strength of devotion to him—a strength which is only to diminish again towards another communion. The bread of life is the bread we are to live by tomorrow and the next day and all the next; the bread in the strength of which we are to get through our business, resist temptation, grow strong in character, rich in enthusiasm, steadfast in will.

This Sacrament tells us first and foremost of a struggle against sin. We are asked indeed to enjoy the results of that struggle—the forgiveness and the grace that it won for us; bread of strength, and wine of pardon. But we are not allowed to forget how our sin was removed—what it cost our Lord in battle and in death. But there is more than that here. There is more than the vision of how awful a conflict was endured for us by One who had no other need to enter it than the great love he bare us. There is the call to enter upon struggle ourselves. There is the reminder that sin can be destroyed only by strenuous means. There is the warning that our daily commonplace sins need to be dealt with in the same earnestness and agony.

Do not do what so many do so often—bewail at Communion only our coldness of feeling and meagerness of faith. Mention your besetting sins—any unkind temper you have, any shady way of doing business, any unholy desires; and, by the Passion and the Cross of him who died that sin might be destroyed, resolve to fight them to the bitter end.

But we must not think that there is here an instance of heroism and self-sacrifice which only a very few, and these at a great distance, are called to repeat in their own lives. In most lives, it is true, the opportunities to heroic sacrifice are very

rare. "But there is a harder, a braver, a better thing than heroic action—namely, the power of the Cross in little, common things." The most sublime fact which could happen today—the fact which would more change and illuminate the world than anything else—would be the lighting up of millions of average Christian lives with the spirit of the Cross. It is not the emergence of a man here and there from the crowd into a brilliant heroism that the world needs. It is the shedding abroad of tenderness, pity, and the cheer and sympathy which come from self-forgetfulness. —Condensed from The Forgiveness of Sins, by George Adam Smith.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Lessons from Judas Iscariot. See pages 81-87 of Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

2. Why do we observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? See Chapter XXVII of The Life of Christ by W. J. Dawson; Chapter I of Remember Jesus Christ, by Robert E. Speer; Chapter X of Christ and Man, by Marcus Dods.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How many trials was Jesus given, and why were so many necessary? 2. What stairway in Rome is climbed by Catholic pilgrims on their knees, and why? 3. Why did Pilate yield to the mob? 4. Does a protest free one from responsibility for an evil which one could prevent? 5. What do you think of Pilate?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

LOYALTY IN TIMES OF TESTING

Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson

According to Strachey, the suite of rooms which Albert, the Prince Consort of England, had occupied in Windsor Castle was kept away from the eyes of all save the most privileged. Within these precincts everything remained as it had been at the Prince's death; and Queen Victoria had commanded that her husband's clothing should be laid afresh each evening upon the bed, and the water should be ready in the basin, as if he were still alive; "and this incredible rite was performed with scrupulous regularity for nearly forty years."

It was a rite performed by the Queen to keep him in remembrance as if still with her. It was, in truth, "an incredible rite," but one which every heart that has known a similar loss can understand. We have come now in our studies to that sacred rite which our Lord enjoined upon his followers, saying, "This do in remembrance of me." What preceded it in that upper room in Jerusalem the night of his betrayal? (Continue with The Historical Background.)

This Do in Remembrance of Me

As the friend who is setting out on a long absence or is passing forever from earth puts into our hands his portrait or something he has used or worn or prized and is pleased to think that we shall treasure it for his sake, so did Christ on the eve of his death secure this one thing, that his disciples should have a memento by which to remember him. And as the dying gift of a friend becomes sacred to us even as his own person, and we cannot bear to see it handed about and remarked upon by those who have not the same loving reverence as ourselves; and as when we gaze at his portrait, or wind up the watch he wound for so many years, or handle the pencil-case worn smooth by his fingers, we recall the many happy times we spent together, and the bright and inspiring words which fell from his lips; so does this sacrament seem sacred to us as Christ's own person, and by it grateful memories of all he was and did throng the mind.—Marcus Dods, in Christ the Man.

Other Ways in Which to Remember Jesus

Sharing in the Lord's Supper is not all. It is not the end but the beginning. When we go home we can act like people who love Jesus and who try to obey him. So we shall be kind. We shall try to help others. We shall try to get our lessons well. People will say that we can be depended upon, that we are faithful. We shall go about "doing good," as Jesus did. We shall try to obey God, our Father, just as Jesus did. It will help us to come to every communion service. If we have forgotten anything we promised to do, we shall be reminded of it. It helps us all to have such reminders. As long as we live we shall need them. Jesus was right. He knew what we needed.—Ernest Bourner Allen.

How to Remain Loyal in Times of Testing

The will of Jesus was kept in harmony with the will of God by constant prayer. I and my Father are one, he could truly say, but that oneness was maintained through communion the one with the other. All the crises of his life he met with prayer. He could calmly face Pilate and the mocking soldiers and the mob on the morrow because he had faced his Father on the Mount the night before. He counseled his disciples to watch and pray, but they slept instead, and when the morrow with its terrible events came they all basely fled, and the staunchest one of them all that night before then ignobly denied his Lord. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, said Jesus. The watching is necessary to make one ready to meet temptation when it comes. "Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have the victory."

The disciples slept instead of watching with their Lord, and how sadly they failed at their first testing! Within a brief space of time they all forsook him and fled, and that same night Peter three times denied him. Sometimes we wonder why we are not always loyal to Christ and his teachings. It is because we are not watchful and prayerful.

"An' Oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

Strong Plants and Strong People Need Support Lest They Fall

A few days ago I spent some time in my garden tying up some of the growing plants. You may say, why did I tie up those which had strong stems, such as rose trees, hollyhocks, dahlias, etc., which seem quite able to stand alone? The answer is, because probably some day a strong wind will blow, and I know they would be unable to stand against it, and would therefore be blown down; or, as they grow bigger, their own weight might become great enough to make them fall over, and even to bring them down to lie on the ground. And so I put strong stakes in the ground beside them, and tied them to the stakes, so that they would be supported and kept from falling.

Similarly, we all need support in life. We cannot stand alone. Some of you, especially those who are younger, perhaps, some boys and girls, may think that you can. You may say: "I am strong, I know how I ought to act and live, and I am going to do it in my own strength." Ah, but there are times of temptation and testing ahead in your lives; times when the winds of temptation will blow so fiercely that if you have no support to which you can cling, and on whose strength you can rely, you will fall and be unable to rise. You cannot meet and resist these temptations and testings in your own strength alone. And that is why your parents and teachers and friends try to lead you to the Lord Jesus, so that you may cling to him and have him as your unfailing support, because he "is able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24).—W. S. Herbert Wylie, in Nature Studies.

Sentence Sermons

The Holy Communion stands as a symbol and witness of the divinest truth of Christianity—a living Christ in the hearts of living men.—Lyman Abbott.

"In memory of the Savior's love,
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble, contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest."

And as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I walk therein,
Not like the hireling for his selfish gain,
But cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led,—
Doing God's will as if it were my own.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Give an account of the arrest of Jesus. Who was Pilate? 2. Read the accounts of the trials before the Jewish authorities. 3. Read all the accounts in all the Gospels of the trial before Pilate. 4. What reason for Pilate's yielding to the mob is given in Mk. 15.15; Lk. 23.13-23; Jn. 19.7-12? 5. What adjectives are applicable to Pilate, as his character is disclosed in this trial?

LESSON XI—JUNE 10

THE ARREST AND TRIAL

GOLDEN TEXT: He was despised and rejected of men. Isaiah 53.3

LESSON Mark 14.43 to 15.15

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.1-6

MARK 15.1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering saith unto him, Thou sayest. 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answereth thou nothing? behold how many things they accuse thee of. 5 But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. 7 And there was one called Barabbas, *lying* bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder. 8 And the multitude went up and began to ask him *to do* as he was wont to do unto them. 9 And Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10 For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. 15 And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PILATE QUESTIONS JESUS, verses 1-5. It was about six o'clock in the morning when the chief priests and the elders and scribes, the whole council or Sanhedrin, after holding a meeting, declaring Jesus worthy of death and binding him, hurried him to the Prætorium where Pilate held his court. Pilate was obliged to come out to them, for the priests would not pollute themselves by entering a Gentile court just before the Passover (Jn. 18.28, 29). They demanded that Pilate confirm their sentence of death pronounced upon Jesus. Pilate demanded to know what charge they brought against him. Three accusations they put forward; Pilate was concerned about one of them only. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate questioned. The Sanhedrin made this accusation against him because they needed a political charge, one hostile to Roman supremacy, in order to influence Pilate. Perhaps there was something of contempt and something of pity in Pilate's voice as he looked at the wearied Prisoner and thought him a pathetic picture of royalty. Pilate had the right to know the truth, and Jesus answered "Yes," as the literal translation of the Greek for "Thou sayest" means. (The Expositor's Greek Testament thinks one is hardly prepared for such a reply to an equivocal question, and says there is a temptation to seek escape by taking the words interrogatively—Dost thou say so?—or evasively—You say so, I make no statement.)

When the chief priests accused Jesus of many other things, he was silent. "Answereth thou nothing?" said Pilate; "Behold how many things they accuse thee of." Still Jesus stood in regal silence, and Pilate marveled. Jesus knew that no words would influence that mob in their frame of mind. "I read very little in the life of Jesus respecting his rights," F. W. Robertson writes, "but I hear a vast deal respecting his wrongs—wrongs borne with a majestic, God-like silence."

"I have had to learn to keep absolutely quiet under every accusation" (Lincoln).

II. PILATE APPEALS TO THE PEOPLE, verses 6-14. Pilate, according to John 18.33-39, examined Jesus privately. "Art thou a King of the Jews? What hast thou done?" he asked. "My Kingdom is not of this world," Jesus replied; "if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." "I find no fault in him," said Pilate, going out again to the chief priests.

"In its length, its onward reach to Calvary, there was no flaw in the character of Jesus. And in its breadth, its sympathy and love, its perfect trust in God, and its perfect reliance on its Father's will, it was ever true. And yet, in spite of the symmetry of character—and I use the words 'in spite of' quite deliberately—there was never a life with such a charm for

man, and never a character that so drew the world, as the life and the character of Jesus Christ" (G. H. Morrison).

"He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place," they cried. The word *Galilee* struck Pilate. Jesus belonged, then, to Herod's jurisdiction; therefore he sent him to Herod, hoping thus to make friends with the latter and at the same time free himself from the troublesome matter.

Herod was glad to see Jesus, because "he had heard concerning him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by him," but to all his questions Jesus answered nothing. Then Herod and his soldiers mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe of royalty and sent him back to Pilate.

The effort to shift the responsibility to Herod having failed, Pilate went out to the assembled Sanhedrin and people and declared that both he and Herod had found no fault in Jesus. At the Passover feast, doubtless in recognition of the celebration as a passing over, it was customary for the governor to release a prisoner whom the people should choose. The people clamored to have their right. It was at this time, it would seem, that Pilate received the message from his wife warning him to "have nothing to do with that just man." "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" he asked them, because, says Mark, he perceived that for envy—because they thought he imperiled their position—the chief priests had delivered Jesus up. Pilate was conversant with the ways of the Jews, he shrewdly suspected that Jesus had been popular with the people and had therefore aroused the envy of the Jewish authorities. But now the fickle people, instigated by the chief priests, demanded the release of Barabbas, the ringleader of an outlaw band which had caused the death of many.

"What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" Pilate asked. His conscience had told him what he should do with Jesus, yet he asked the people!

"What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? Shall I reject him and live precisely as if I had never heard his name? Or shall I accept him as the Lord from heaven in human nature, trust him as my Savior, and obey him as my King? I shall do the one or the other; and yet how many are seeking, like Pilate, to evade the question!" (W. M. Taylor).

The people who but five short days earlier had acclaimed Jesus as king now shouted, "Crucify him." "Why, what evil hath he done?" Pilate asked them in helpless dismay. But they only cried the louder, "Crucify him." "'Kill him!' yelled Annas and Caiaphas, and with them the Pharisaical vipers hissed, the sellers of the holy animals, the money-changers, the men who rented beasts of burden, the porters of the caravans, shrieked. 'Kill him!' howled the scribes, wrapped in their theological cloaks, the vendors of the Passover fair, the tavern-keepers of the city, the Levites, the servants of the temple, the hired helpers of the usurers, the errand boys of the priests, all the servile horde assembled before the Procurator's house" (Papini).

III. PILATE'S ATTEMPT TO DISOWN RESPONSIBILITY, verse 15. Pilate released Barabbas and had Jesus scourged. It has been suggested that scourging, though a terrible ordeal, was really inflicted in mercy upon one about to be crucified, for it exhausted his physical strength so that the time of more terrible torture on the cross was lessened. It is difficult to realize how great were the sufferings of Jesus at this time. "There are familiar verses here, which we read trippingly, when in truth the voice should fall and pause, while the heart seeks to know the fellowship of his sufferings."

Then Pilate had Jesus brought before the people. "Behold the man!" he cried. If he hoped that the sight of the suffering Man would appease the mob, he was mistaken, for they only renewed their cries of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Then a personal motive was brought to bear upon Pilate. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." One innocent man's life was worth nothing when weighed in the balance with the self-interest of weak, unscrupulous Pilate. He called for a basin of water and washed his hands before them all saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." And all the people shouted, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

"The cry has had a terrible fulfillment. The whole race is haunted by the

deed. Deeds of wrong do haunt men like their shadow. They isolate and despiritualize" (W. M. Clow).

"Pilate did not want to condemn an innocent man, but he did not want the government to be troubled with a possible riot, and did not want his own name implicated at Rome. He pacified the populace by assenting to the crime, and appeased his conscience by disowning it. How readily we think that if we protest against a thing formally, we absolve ourselves! Pilate did not want to have his name associated with a riot at Jerusalem; and his name has been associated forever with this judicial murder. Little did the proud Roman think that his name would go down to all the years, to all the world, in infamy" (Hugh Black).

"Pilate could not abnegate his responsibility and cast it upon others. Public men frequently think they can do so; they say that they bow to the force of public opinion but wash their hands of the deed. But if their position, like Pilate's, demands that they should decide for themselves and take the consequences, the guilt of sinful action clings to them and cannot be transferred. This whole scene is a mirror for magistrates, to show them down what dark paths they may be pushed if they resign themselves to be the mere tools of the popular will" (James Stalker).

Then Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified. "What the Church calls the Passion of Jesus is in fact ended when he departs from the judgment hall of Pilate. From this point onward to the cross his step has the firmness and tranquillity of one who, in the presence of outward hostility, has inward assurance and peace" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

"It is a striking illustration of the irony of history that Pilate was overtaken by the very fate to escape which he abandoned Jesus. Soon after the Crucifixion his subjects lodged a complaint against him at Rome. He was recalled from his province and never returned. Ultimately, it is said, he terminated his existence by his own hand, 'wearied out with miseries' " (James Stalker).

"The greatest of all instances of God's bringing good out of evil is the fact that because of Judas, Caiaphas, and Pilate, the Divine Redeemer was lifted up that he might draw all men unto himself" (John A. Broadus).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And the multitude began to ask him to do as he was wont to do unto them, verse 8. Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would, Mt. 27.15. Professor Langdon of Oxford, writing in The Expository Times, thinks this custom is of Assyrian origin, for on certain days the kings of Assyria released a prisoner precisely as Pilate did.

When he had scourged him, verse 15. Our illustration shows a Roman scourge made of thongs of leather to which pieces of lead or bones are attached. A prisoner was stripped and bound, usually in a stooping posture, and lashes were rained on his back till the flesh was flayed. So severe was this punishment that it was called "the intermediate death." Prisoners frequently fainted and some even died under it.

A Roman Scourge

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What was the spirit of the crowd after the feeding of the five thousand? At the Triumphal Entry of Jerusalem? How many days passed between that event and the arrest and trial of Jesus? Why did the attitude of the people toward Jesus change?

The Arrest

Read Matthew 26.36-56; Mark 14.26-52; Luke 22.39-53; John 18.1-12.

The Jewish Trials

Read John 18.13-28; Matthew 26.57 to 27.2; Mark 14.53 to 15.1; Luke 22.54 to 23.1.

The Roman Trials

Read Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; and John 18.28 to 19.16.

Pilate was the fifth Roman Procurator of Judea; he was appointed to that office in 26 A. D.

Where the Trials Were Held

Jesus was tried before Pilate in the Prætorium, or palace of the Prætor, or governor. Tradition identifies this with the Castle of Antonia at the northwest corner of the temple area. The best authorities identify it with Herod's Palace, now known as "The Tower of David," which is near the modern Joppa Gate.

For nearly 1600 years Catholic pilgrims have been going to Rome to climb on their knees the Scala Santa, or Pilate's Stairway, and win for each step, by the Pope's proclamation, nine years' indulgence! There are twenty-eight of these marble steps which lead to the chapel of the Lateran Palace, and deep hollows have been worn in them by the knees of penitents. It was the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, who had these steps brought from Jerusalem because she believed them to be the steps up which Jesus was taken bound to Pilate, and down which he was led on his way to be crucified. These were the steps up which Luther was toiling on his knees when the truth flashed upon him that "The just shall live by faith."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Make sure that the mere telling of the story to Intermediates will leave in their minds the thought of how powerful a force for evil is moral weakness. Emergencies come to all. The morally weak sooner or later cause untold misery to themselves and to others. There is many a one who could not be a Judas but who could be a Pilate.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

JESUS FACING HIS ENEMIES

Beginning the Lesson

Savonarola was worshiped by the populace. They would so press upon him to kiss his robe that he was forced to have a guard accompany him on his walks. But this same adoring crowd turned against him, imprisoned him for heresy, tortured him, and burned him at the stake. When he stood on the fagots and the Bishop said to him, "I excommunicate you from the church militant," he returned, "Thou canst not separate me from the Church Triumphant!"

Savonarola was traveling in the footsteps of his Redeemer. The populace who sought to make Jesus king are now crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Condemned by Pontius Pilate

Pilate was a politician, true to his type in every age and land, making use of any tool at hand, and putting his private interest first. He was not a bad man, much less a moral monster. He was not careless about his work; he heard the evidence patiently. Nor did he mean to be unjust. No, he was simply a politician who found himself in a difficult situation and was trying to avoid a decision. What occupied his mind was how to keep on good terms with the emperor at Rome, how to hold his office and retire in a few years without mishap, and enjoy a quiet old age. His patron friend at Rome had recently died, making his position precarious, so that he must all the more avoid giving offense to the touchy Jews, whom he despised as heartily as they despised him. He would have liked to see justice done to Jesus, whom he regarded as a gentle, harmless visionary; but he felt he could not take the risk of setting him free. "I have power to release you," he said to his prisoner. Officially he had. Morally he had frittered away that power. "If self the wavering balance shake, 'tis rarely right adjusted." Wanting to do right, but weakly submitting to wrong, he played politics with the life of Jesus, keeping his office but crucifying his Savior!

Anatole France has a story about Pilate in a book called "Mother of Pearl," a fine example of the irony of which he is master. It tells of a Roman gentleman who was in Jerusalem at the time of the trial of Jesus, but who did not stay until it was ended. There was much talk about the young Prophet, and he was interested. Often he had wondered how the case came out. Years later he saw Pilate—an old man, broken and retired—at a watering-place, pushed in a wheel-chair by slaves.

He ventured to speak to him, seeking to know the fate of the young Teacher. Pilate did not seem to comprehend, so the gentleman recalled every item he had heard, in his effort to refresh the mind of the former governor. But in vain. Pilate said at last: "I do not seem to recall the incident." The sting of the point is that the story might easily have been true.—Joseph Fort Newton.

"Behold, the Man!"

This is the magnificent thing to remember—that through all that long torture of imprisonment, court trials, midnight hearings, scourgings, loss of food and loss of sleep, he never once ceased to be the Master. His accusers were determined. They thronged the courtyard before the palace, clamoring for his blood, yet even they felt a momentary awe when he appeared before them on the balcony.

Even Pilate felt it. The two men offered a strange contrast standing there—the Roman governor whose lips were so soon to speak the sentence of death, and the silent, self-possessed ex-carpenter—accused and doomed—yet bearing himself with so much majesty, as though he were somehow beyond the reach of man-made law, and safe from the hurt of its penalties. Pilate raised his hand; the shouting and the tumult died; a deathly stillness descended upon the crowd. He turned and faced the figure at his side, and from his lips there burst a sentence which is a truer portrait than any painter has ever given us. The involuntary testimony of the flabby, cynical Roman in the presence of perfect strength, perfect assurance, perfect calm: "Behold," he cried, "the man!"

Behold, the Man! Hofmann

Voices That Prevail

Whose voices prevailed when Jesus was condemned to death?

The voices that represented established government and organized religion prevailed. Both of these forms of institution were ordained of God, and each was established in the interests of justice and righteousness. When the supreme test came, both broke down. The voices of the chief priests were clamorous for the crucifixion of Jesus, and the voice of the supreme representative of imperial Rome gave sentence for injustice and furnished the oldest creed of Christendom a name of lasting ignominy: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate."

But that was not the worst of it. The voices of the people prevailed. It is sadly possible to fool enough of the people enough of the time to bring sad results in the life of the world. Some voices were not heard. The voices of those whom Jesus had healed and made to see and raised to new life and hope were not called for in Pilate's judgment hall. Those who were heard as representatives of the people were insistent with loud voices demanding the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was condemned by popular vote. To the pertinent inquiry, "Why, what evil hath he done?" they ventured no reply; but they insisted that he be crucified, and their voices prevailed.

A sad case can be made out against government, political and ecclesiastical, when we consider the trial of Jesus. And what is worse, the case stands no better for democracy. Not always, surely, is the voice of the people the voice of God.

And yet it is to those very same tests the question is submitted on appeal. The narrative does not close with a story of the eternal doom of the world and of the

confession of the failure of mankind, even in the face of so palpable a miscarriage of justice. We might expect some word to the effect that the crucifixion of Jesus was the last insult that God would endure at the hands of men. That is not the way the story reads. As one that should "appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober" the appeal of God is from the mad judgment of that sad hour to the enlightened conscience of humanity sitting in judgment on itself. It is an appeal to the honor and justice of men who have once betrayed their trust.

Is that a safe experiment? Can humanity be trusted to right its own wrongs? Can it establish and maintain a righteous state and a pure and loyal church? Can it be trusted to elevate its own masses of population till the people rule in righteousness, and democracy ceases to be a disgrace?

The answer of the New Testament appears to be that God has enough confidence in humanity to face the experiment undismayed. The voices of reason and justice and honor shall finally prevail in church and State and in the life of the people.—The Youth's Companion.

Pilate-like

Technically, he cleared himself—like a weak-kneed sheriff who surrenders his prisoner with a few feeble protests to the lynching mob. Of course Pilate was in a difficult place. The mob was posing as a band of patriotic citizens, and Pilate was undoubtedly afraid of being called a traitor to Rome. He chose the easier course of bowing to the will of the mob.

Is that rare today? A young man finds his friends proposing conduct contrary to his judgment. He protests feebly, and then yields, says, "Well, it's your idea and I'm not responsible."

A business man accepts the chance to make a big deal by abandoning his convictions and descending to the conventional standards of business ethics.

A young woman finds herself in a quandary, with her conscience recommending one cause and her social advancement another.

Servility? O yes, there's plenty of it right in ourselves.—Henry van Dyke, in Light My Candle.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Pontius Pilate; a character study. "Pilate's spirit was that of strenuous worldliness which makes self its aim and subordinates everything to success." See Pilate Washing His Hands, The Outlook, March 20, 1909.

2. The curse of moral weakness. Which can do more evil, a weak ruler or an unscrupulous one?

3. In the moment of publicity and pressure, the merely well-intentioned fails because he is not accustomed to do right at all costs.—R. C. Gillie.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How could Jesus have avoided his death? 2. Why did he not avoid it? 3. What were the Seven Words from the Cross? 4. What reasons had the Jews for crucifying Jesus? 5. What has his death on the cross accomplished? 6. What does his death on the cross mean to you?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson

When a man is being selected for service as a juryman, what question is asked him in regard to his opinion of the case to be tried? If he has already formed an opinion which evidence cannot change, he is disqualified for service. In the Jewish trial of Jesus, the members of the Sanhedrin were the jurors. Had they any preconceived opinions as to the guilt of their Prisoner? It is a maxim of our common law that "Every man is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty." Another maxim is that "No man can be called upon to give evidence against himself." These maxims have come down to us from the Hebrew practise. How were these principles carried out in the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin? How did that trial end? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Munkacsy's Picture of Christ Before Pilate

Give each of your pupils a penny reproduction (Perry, number 831) of Munkacsy's

picture of Christ before Pilate. Then question them about the artist's conception of the scene. Here is what Ian Maclaren finds:

Pontius Pilate on his judgment seat is calculating with his fingers, as if it were a sum of arithmetic, the chances of action—whether it would be expedient to acquit or condemn the prisoner. Two young students of the law are discussing a fine point—whether, say, the Messiah could come out of Nazareth, or whether he would work miracles on the Sabbath. An elder of the people, increased with goods and swollen with pride, leans back in his seat and eyes Jesus with contempt, appraising at its money value his simple garment. One scribe, more thoughtful and candid than his fellows, is not certain about the situation, and is asking himself whether this man really is a blasphemer as they had concluded, or a prophet in disguise. An orator of powerful presence and brazen countenance, a typical demagogue, has struck an attitude demanding the condemnation of the accused. The crowd beyond is surging to and fro, a mass of senseless, fanatical faces, and one young man shutting his eyes and opening his mouth, after the fashion of his kind in all ages, is bawling, "Crucify him, crucify him." A Roman soldier, detached, indifferent, d o m i n a n t, keeps back the rabble with the butt of his spear and protects Jesus from unlicensed violence. Neither among rulers nor mob, neither in judge nor soldier has the prisoner a friend.

Ecce Homo (Behold, the Man) Arch, Jerusalem

Pilate and His Wife

One of the chapters in Mrs. Agnes S. Turnbull's beautiful book of Bible stories entitled Far Above Rubies is about the wife of Pontius Pilate. The following is condensed and slightly adapted from the latter part of that chapter:

"They are at it again, my lady," Livia spoke suddenly as she arranged her mistress' hair.

"What do you mean?" Procla, the wife of Pontius Pilate, questioned.

"The Jews. They are making trouble again. One of the house guards told me this morning. He said my lord Pilate took his seat in the judgment hall, the outdoor one, just after daybreak, and a great mob came shouting and threatening, bringing an accused man to be judged. It was the young prophet."

Procla sprang to her feet. "Quick, Livia, parchment. I must send my lord Pilate a message."

In a second she had written a single sentence: "Pontius, have nothing to do with this just man, for I dreamed many things today in a dream because of him. Procla."

"Take this, Livia, to one of the house guards. Tell him to deliver it to my lord Pilate at once."

Procla stood still, her hands clenched, all the vague heaviness of spirit under which she had wakened, pressing down again upon her. Something horrible impending, something in which she and Pontius were bound up together with pain and disaster.

She started with fright. An echo of sudden shouting and tumult had reached her, here in the far sheltered side of the palace. What must it be in the courtyard! What could that turbulent mob be demanding of Pontius? What could they be saying against the prophet? But Pontius would not believe them. He agreed with her about the entire innocence of the man.

Livia entered. "It is in his hands, my lady. I waited until the guard came back. He says the Jews are very furious. Worse than he has ever seen them. My lord Pilate has just ordered the prophet scourged."

Procla turned away and went into her sitting-room. Scourged! And by the governor's order. Oh, she could never forgive Pontius for this. Never. Her heart rose in anger against him. The prophet would recover from his wounds, terrible as they would be. But she and Pontius together would bear the scars of this disgraceful and unjust act.

She sat still, cold and heartsick, until at last the door opened and Pilate entered the room.

"Pontius! What have you done?"

"I couldn't help it, Procla. I did everything I could. That devil-mob got the best of me again. I offered them everything—another prisoner. I told them this man was innocent. I even sent him to Herod, and he sent him back to me. Finally I washed my hands before them and told them I was clear of all sin against him—"

"You washed your hands," Procla repeated with slow scorn. "But what about your soul?"

"I knew you would be distressed, Procla. After your message, too. But I tell you I did everything possible to save him without giving up my position and all I've worked my whole lifetime to gain. How many men would do that? If you could only have heard the mob and seen their insane fury, you would understand better. 'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Cæsar's,' they yelled at me. And they meant it! If I had acquitted the prophet, by tomorrow a delegation would have been on their way to Rome as they did the last time there was trouble. I know Tiberius! This time it would have meant my recall, and no further appointments. Failure."

Still Procla looked at him with far-away eyes. "And the prophet? Will they imprison him now, or did they think your scourging was sufficient?"

"Procla, you are torturing me!" Pilate exclaimed. "I've been through enough this morning without going all over it. Don't you know what I've been trying to tell you? I've given orders for execution. It is for that they have been clamoring like fiends for two hours. They have taken him away now to crucify him."

As Procla stood numbed with horror, Pilate continued: "I never saw anyone like him! As they led him away he turned and looked at me as though he pitied me! How did he know I needed his pity? If he had cursed me I wouldn't have cared. But pity from him, bleeding from head to foot, going off to his death! It's undone me."

Sentence Sermons

We are morally responsible for every wrong which we have the power to prevent.—J. D. Jones.

It has come to be our turn, as it came to be Pilate's, to decide upon Christ's claims and to act upon our decision.—Marcus Dods.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why do we call the place of crucifixion Calvary? 2. How was the superscription over the cross written, as John tells in Jn. 19.20? 3. What words did Pilate have with the Jews over this inscription? (Jn. 19.19-22.) 4. What friends stood near Jesus at the crucifixion? (Jn. 19.25-27.) 5. What reason for the cross is given in John 3.16?

THE CRUCIFIXION

GOLDEN TEXT: God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5.8

LESSON Mark 15.16-47 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.7-12

MARK 15.22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23 And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24 And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah. 36 And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down. 37 And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE CRUCIFIXION, verses 22-27. See The Historical Background. They led Jesus away to be crucified, going outside the city, as was the Jewish usage (Acts 7.58) to Golgotha. *Golgotha* means "the place of a skull." We call the spot *Calvary,* from the Latin word *calvaris,* skull. See The Geographical Background. It was customary to give one about to be crucified a stupefying drink, and they offered such to Jesus, wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. Matthew says he tasted it and then refused it. Jesus regarded the suffering before him as part of the cup which the Father had given him to drink, and he would drink it to the dregs.

The garments of the crucified—the headdress, shoes, outer garment, girdle, and seamless inner robe—were the perquisites of the executioners, and the soldiers cast lots to see what each should have.

"There have been many like these soldiers, unmoved by the most pitiful tragedy, save by what they could get out of it. In the Great War, when mothers gave their sons, wives their husbands, and men themselves, and the nation poured out its money in a passion of service, the profiteer thought only of his own greed. He had no call to service; he saw only a chance to get rich. He got rich, but his wealth is blood money" (Joseph Fort Newton).

It was the third hour, nine o'clock in the morning, when they crucified him. The accusation placed above him on the cross was "The King of the Jews." Pilate knew of no crime of which Jesus had been guilty, and by this inscription he sought to annoy the priests, who, as he expected, considered it an insult to themselves, Jn. 19.21-22. That all who passed by might read it, the inscription was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Jn. 19.19, 20), the languages spoken at this time throughout the civilized world.

On either side of Jesus a thief was crucified. "Crucifixion was terrible and disgraceful enough in itself, but if Jesus had hung upon his cross with nothing near him to disturb the impression of his calm serenity and innocence, it might have happened that the people who stood and watched would have lost sight of the disgrace and would have felt the majesty of the sacrifice. Already that place of suffering might have seemed as glorious as it has seemed to the world since. But as it was, they went to the prison and dragged out two wretched culprits who were waiting for their doom. That there might be no doubt about the disgracefulness of the Savior's sufferings, they hung him between two thieves" (Phillips Brooks).

II. THE TAUNTS OF THE SPECTATORS, verses 29-32. The passers-by (the cross was near the public road leading to Jerusalem) mocked Jesus, saying, "Ha! thou that destroyest the temple in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." The chief priests also had their fling. "He saved others; himself he cannot save," they cried. They spoke in derision, but note their admission that he

saved others! "They intended scorn; they gave praise." "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross," they continued, "that we may see and believe." And the thieves between whom Jesus hung added their reproaches to that of the crowd.

III. THE DARKNESS WITHOUT AND WITHIN, verses 33-36. From the sixth to the ninth hour (from noon to three P. M.) there was darkness over the whole land. "It seems only in accordance with the narrative to regard the event as supernatural, while the event itself might have been brought about by natural causes; and among these we must call special attention to the earthquake in which this darkness terminated. For it is a well-known phenomenon that such darkness frequently precedes earthquakes. The language of the Evangelist seems to imply that this darkness extended, not over all the land of Israel, but over the inhabited earth. The expression must, of course, not be pressed to its full literality, but explained that many thought it extended far beyond Judea to other lands" (Alfred Edersheim).

At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? "Here and there the Gospels keep a phrase actually used by Jesus, and in his native Aramaic speech. It looks like a human instinct that made Peter and the rest wish to keep the very words and tones of their Master, as most of us would wish to keep the accents and phrases of those we love. It takes us to the very heart of him at the end, in his cry, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*" (J. R. Glover).

"He forsaken! Who can comprehend it?" cried Luther. Dr. Alexander Maclaren suggests that "separation from God is the true death, the wages of sin; and in that dread hour he bore in his own consciousness the uttermost of its penalty." Dr. R. F. Horton has another explanation: "Jesus uttered Psalm 22.1: he had meditated on the whole Psalm as foreshadowing his experience. If on the cross he was consciously quoting the Psalm of the Suffering Messiah, and the first verse was overheard, we are relieved of the difficulty which some have found in the thought that even for a moment Jesus felt forsaken by God. But, on the other hand, this difficulty often disappears and becomes the deepest well of comfort in the dark hours of the Christian's experience. To know that he, our Lord and Savior, in the fulfillment of his sacrifice for sin felt deserted by God, brings hope and comfort to the trembling human soul that is tempted to utter the same cry."

"In the presence of Christ's suffering we can never reasonably suppose that our own is any indication of neglect or disapproval on God's part. When all God's waves and billows go over our heads, the experience of Christ is a plank to which if we cling we shall not sink" (Marcus Dods).

Some of the bystanders said, "Behold, he calleth Elijah." No Jew could have mistaken *Eloi* for the name *Elijah,* Edersheim thinks, nor yet misinterpreted a quotation of Psalm 22.1 as a call for the prophet. Wetstein thinks the Jews said this in mockery, as they had many stories of appearances of Elijah to rescue men from peril of death.

Jesus said, "I thirst," Jn. 19.28. One of the bystanders ran and filled a sponge with vinegar—the sour wine which was the customary drink of the Roman soldiers—fastened it to the end of a reed that they might reach his mouth, for the cross was but slightly elevated, and gave him a drink. "Let be," said the man to the others, Allow me to give him the drink: "let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down." Seemingly he thought that if Jesus' life were prolonged, then Elijah would be given sufficient time to come if he would.

"It is finished," Jesus cried (Jn. 19.30). "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23.46).

IV. THE DEATH, verses 38, 39. And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. The life of sorrow ended in tragedy, the taunting and ignominy culminated in a criminal's death; but it was a triumphant, glorious death, a death that was the greatest victory the world has ever known.

"Brother, for thee he died,
The King that reigneth now,
And hath Death's crown of pride
To ring his brow.
Yea, on that bitter tree,
For thee his eyes grew dim.
Brother, he died for thee;
Live thou to him."
(Frederick Langbridge).

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VIA DOLOROSA

The Sorrowful Way over which Jesus Bore the Cross

The curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was rent from top to bottom. Into the former only the high priest might enter, and he but once a year when he appeared before the mercy seat to make atonement for the people. It is the teaching of traditional theology that the rending of the veil symbolized that henceforth there was access to the pardon and peace of God, not by the ritual and altar of the Mosaic dispensation, but by the new way which Christ's sacrificial death secured.

"I know not how that Calvary's cross,
A world from sin could free;
I only know its matchless love
Has brought God's love to me"
(H. W. Farrington).

V. THE VERDICT, verse 39. When the centurion who had charge of the execution saw that Jesus so died, he feared exceedingly (Mt. 27.54), saying, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They offered him wine mingled with myrrh, verse 23. The crucified might hang for hours, even days, in the unutterable anguish of suffering, till consciousness at last failed. It was a merciful practise to give to those led to execution a draught of strong wine mixed with myrrh, so as to deaden consciousness. This charitable office was performed at the cost of an association of women in Jerusalem.—Alfred Edersheim.

And they crucify him, verse 24. The Jewish punishment was stoning. The Romans were put to death by the sword. Rome introduced crucifixion into Palestine from the East, for while she would not use it for her meanest citizens, save for crimes against the state, she willingly crucified Jews. To die on the cross was to suffer the most ignominious death possible, and the Jewish name of contempt for Jesus was "The Hanged." But instead of the cross eclipsing his name, his name has transfigured the cross. His disciples went forth and preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, and the cross of shame became at once the cross of glory.

The King of the Jews, verse 26. During the Great War the Turkish government forbade the Jews to pray at their wailing place by the temple wall because they prayed for the re-establishment of a Jewish state. When Turkish officials raided the library of a missionary they found printed on the front page of a book these words from Ps. 137.5: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." "What does this mean?" they asked suspiciously. "Oh, those are a few words from David, the Jewish king," answered the missionary. "Jewish king! Where is he? We must arrest him!" It caused the missionary considerable trouble to convince the officials that King David had been dead for nearly 3000 years, and that the Jews have no king today.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Question Bearing Upon the Lesson

Who once said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," and to whom did he say it?

On the Way to Calvary

Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified. The Roman soldiers gathered about Jesus, clothed him with a scarlet robe, put a crown of thorns on his head and a reed in his hand, and kneeling before him mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they spat upon him and struck him. After all these cruel indignities they took off the robe, put his own garments upon him, and led him toward Golgotha. At first Jesus bore his own cross, according to custom, but soon they compelled a chance traveler, Simon of Cyrene, to carry it. With them went a great multitude. To the weeping women about him Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

The Time of the Crucifixion

It was from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon of Friday, April 7, A. D. 30, that Jesus hung upon the cross.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Along the traditional Via Dolorosa, the Sorrowful Way, which leads to the traditional site of Calvary, fourteen tablets mark "the stations of the cross." Needless to say, the actual path trodden by the feet of Jesus is hidden beneath the surface of modern Jerusalem, for the city has suffered siege after siege and been razed to the ground many times. No one knows where are the sites of the stations of the cross.

Along the Via Dolorosa

The traditional place of the crucifixion is beneath the Arch of the Holy Sepulcher. The site accepted by most scholars is an oval, or skull-shaped knoll outside the city wall on the north, not far from St. Stephen's Gate.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Beginning the Lesson

In the Loggia of the Vatican at Rome is Raphael's picture of Christ's Triumph over Paganism. His conception of Christ is worthy of the genius of St. John, is Bishop Bashford's way of expressing it. "Paganism is represented as a marble statue of a beautiful, sensuous goddess. Christianity is represented by no word of command, by no sign of outward power. It is symbolized by Christ hanging upon his cross, his head just fallen in death. Here is Christianity at its lowest point of external power. But the stone image has fallen and broken to fragments before this vision of purity and self-sacrificing love. It is this triumph of Christ which we reverently study today.

The Governmental View of the Meaning of the Cross

Hugo Grotius, the great Dutch jurist of the seventeenth century, attached his name to classic interpretation of our Lord's death. To him the heart of the problem lies in the fact that God is a Ruler. Because of this fact the ends of public justice must be considered. God wants to forgive men, but he cannot forgive in such a fashion that the interests of moral government are not protected. The death of Christ secures the interests of government while it makes possible forgiveness. When men realize that only at such a cost was forgiveness possible, all their sense of the sanctity of moral government is steadied and deepened.

As time has passed on it has tended to become less a matter of formal emphasis on government and more a matter of the conservation of all ethical interests. The sense that forgiveness must be experienced in such a fashion as to guard and develop all the interests of the ethical life of man is the deposit which comes to most of us from a study of the governmental theories.—Lynn H. Hough.

The Moral-Influence View of the Meaning of the Cross

When trained theologians think of the moral-influence view they always remember that man of startling brilliancy and romantic and checkered career, Abelard, whose name has a place all its own among the intellectual leaders of the twelfth century. Probably as noble and gripping an expression of this interpretation as one could find anywhere is in Horace Bushnell's famous work, The Vicarious Sacrifice. The heart of this conception is that Calvary is a great revelation of God's love for sinful men, and that his love so revealed has power to win them from sin and to release all the forces of the new life. This view makes a constant appeal to the heart of the Church, and it is hardly too much to say that every typical modern preacher has included it in his message.

The deeper evangelical consciousness always insists that the satisfaction view, perverted as it often has been, bears witness to a truth of which we must not lose sight. That sin makes a tragic problem for God as well as for man, and that in some deep spiritual fashion Christ made its responsibility his own in his death, is a matter not to be expounded in the terms of formal logic, but to be apprehended

by the quickened perception of men in the tense experience of moral struggle. More and more we are learning that every new approach throws some new light upon Calvary and that all of the great old theories have a message for us.—Lynn H. Hough.

The Satisfaction View of the Meaning of the Cross

In its deepest consciousness the Church has always felt clear that on Calvary Christ did something for men which they never could have done for themselves. Certain well-defined types of interpretation have emerged in the long process of thinking and of writing about this great theme. We are beginning to understand that these interpretations are not mutually exclusive. They supplement each other and each has its contribution to make to our understanding of the great theme.

The so-called "satisfaction" view has emphasized the Godward side of Christ's death. Sin had placed an obstacle on God's side between men and forgiveness and the death of Christ removed that obstacle. From Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* down the centuries various forms of this view have been set forth in systematic fashion. Sometimes God's justice is the matter emphasized and it is declared that Christ's death satisfied the claims of justice and made forgiveness possible. It is easy to see that unless expressed very wisely and carefully this view lends itself to distortion. Sometimes it has been put in such crass and mechanical and rigid form as to reflect upon the character of God and deprive Christ's death of its noblest spiritual appeal. But the sense at the heart of it that in some deep spiritual sense Christ took our responsibilities upon himself and thus made possible a new relation between us and God has never been lost out of the deepest evangelical Christian experience.—Lynn H. Hough, in The Christian Advocate.

The Gospel of the Cross

The man whose life is stained with the blighting memory of sin and shame, upon whose soul lies heavily the bitter weight of years misspent, of lives ruined, of wrongs that never can be righted, rejoices to see in the death of the Divine Master, sent into the world by the Father, going freely to the cross for men, the pledge of sin forgiven. At the cross his burden falls away; the loving Christ has taken it from him.

Another had lived a life outwardly clean and correct. His experience has been the gradual unfolding of the powers within him, a deepening desire to know the larger meanings of his life as they are revealed in Christ, and enter into them. To him the gospel of the cross is that Divine Love has made the race struggle his own, identified himself with human need to the limit of sacrificial love. His great joy is not that Christ has borne his sin, but has called him to be a sharer in his great world-burden. Beneath the shadow of the cross, he has passed from anxiety about personal salvation, and speculation about theories of representation, to the loving labors of the Christ.

Another emphasizes the sacramental view. He thinks of Christ's work as in him rather than for him. In his own strength he must fail. The very life of Christ must be given to him, if he is to win his battle and live a truly Christian life. But ere Christ's life can be given to men it must be poured forth; on the cross he beholds it freely given for men; the Lord's Supper, recalling his death, is the perpetual pledge that it is his who sincerely hungers for the bread of life.

Yet another cannot separate in his thought the death of Christ from his life and his words. To him the Incarnation, the entrance of God in Christ into human life, is the beginning of the cross. He does not depreciate Calvary; he extends and prolongs it immeasurably. But he cannot think of the cross as a single event of time; to him it is an age-long sacrifice, not a momentary surrender, a divine life-work, not an infinite transaction. He speaks of the atoning life more than of the atoning death. To him it seems that Christ is still being borne to the cross; the thought of Sigismund Goetze's great picture possesses his soul: he seems to see the Master being crucified afresh not only on the steps of St. Paul's cathedral today (as the picture suggests), but wherever men are deaf to his appeals, false to their true selves and their fellows, blind to the rich meanings of their lives.

So one might go on indefinitely. All human theories are partial and inadequate. The theory for every man is the theory that makes vivid to him the fact, the theory that warms his love for Christ, and quickens his impulse to serve him. There may be crude thinking, but if there is an open mind and a responsive will, the Spirit will guide him into the larger truth. But there must be no mistake about the fact. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Recon-

ciliation involves separation, antagonism. Man self-governed is alienated from God. Sin is separation from the Infinite above and the Infinite within. The gospel of the cross is that in Jesus Christ the gulf is bridged; through him man comes to God, and to himself.

My own thought of the cross finds constant illustration and illumination in that sphere to which Jesus so often pointed men, the home. A father's heart is rent by the sin and disobedience of his son. What is the longing of the father's heart toward his boy? The first burst of resentment over, the father-love speaks. He would forgive the boy freely, fully. But forgiveness without change of mind and heart on the son's part achieves nothing but the mastery of the father's spirit; its probable issue is indifference and contempt and continued sin. And so he must show his son his sin: in some way the boy must see it as it is. Moreover, he must bear with his son the effects of his sin. Whatever the boy has to suffer, he, too, for the love he bears him, must suffer with him. Above all, he must save his son from his sin, so that it shall never stain his life again.

And how does the cross save? In the home the process is easy to trace. Touched by his father's sorrow, seeing in its true light his sin, what it costs, where it leads, won by the love that shares with him its penalty, the boy comes to himself, turns from his sin, henceforth rejoices to take his father's way, not his own. Just this it is to be saved. Wherever kneeling at the cross, won by the love of the Father who sent, or the love of the Divine Savior who came, a man sees his sin as it is, where it leads, what it costs, comes to himself, dethrones the baffled schemes of self, enthrones the love and the will of Christ, he is saved.—Condensed from A Working Theology, by Alexander MacColl.

India Is Seeing the Meaning of the Cross in One of her Sons

When Gandhi came out of jail he found the Hindus and Mohammedans suspicious, jealous, and divided. Before his arrest they had become united in his person, but when he was taken away and put in jail they fell apart. He pleaded and remonstrated, but the divisions persisted and became acute. Out of sheer sorrow of heart he announced that he would undergo, as a penance, a fast of twenty-one days.

It touched India to the quick, for they are an emotionally responsive people. They called a Unity Conference on the tenth day of his fast. It was composed of representatives of the various religions of India, including the Metropolitan, the head of the Church of England in India. They debated back and forth the questions at issue. They passed resolutions covering their points of difference and appointed a commission of twenty-five as a Permanent Board of Adjudication on intercommunal matters. But the most remarkable resolution was the one in which they stated that "We recognize the right of an individual to change his faith at will, provided no inducement is offered to effect that change, such as the offering of material gain," and, further, "We also recognize the right of that individual not to suffer persecution from the community which he may leave." When one remembers that in Islam apostasy meant death, and in Hinduism social death, then this resolution marks a national epoch and is really a National Declaration of Religious Freedom. The silent pressure of the spirit of Gandhi was doing its work. And Gandhi's spirit was being pressed upon by the Spirit of Jesus.

On the eighteenth day of the fast, Mr. C. F. Andrews, who was editing Gandhi's paper, Young India, while he was fasting, wrote an editorial in which he described Gandhi lying upon his couch on the upper veranda in Delhi, weak and emaciated. He ended it with this sentence: "As I looked upon him there and caught the meaning of it all, I felt as never before in my own experience the meaning of the cross."—E. Stanley Jones, in The Christ of the Indian Road.

Man's Part in the Atonement

It is for every person to settle with himself what he will do with this great sacrifice which has been offered by Jesus according to the will of God, upon the cross of Calvary, and with the innumerable benefits which the sacrifice has won. We have the same liberty of choice with regard to the sacrifice of Christ that we have with regard to the sacrifice of patriots. Should it be our pleasure, we can avail ourselves of the liberty and of the right which men of old have won for our commonwealth and carry ourselves as free-born citizens, and accept the responsibility of our high citizenship. Or we can carry ourselves as bondsmen, refusing any share in the government of the country and rendering no service. We can

also accept with grateful heart the spiritual blessings which are bestowed by the cross, claiming the forgiveness of sins, and taking our place as the sons of God. Or we can prefer guilt to righteousness, and remain of our own will in the bondage of sin. Two things are certain, that no one can achieve his own salvation, and that our salvation has been accomplished by Jesus Christ; and still another thing is quite as certain, that by an act of consent any one can place himself within the merit of Jesus' sacrifice and so make himself an heir to its fulness of life.—John Watson, in The Expositor.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The Atonement. The saving worth of Jesus Christ to man as a sinner—that is what the Atonement means to us; I think it surpasses all explanation of it, just as life is more than biology.—Henry van Dyke. See Chapter VIII of A Working Theology, by Alexander MacColl; Chapters XXVII, XXIX of The Training of the Twelve, by A. B. Bruce; pages 25-30 of Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHY JESUS CHOSE THE CROSS

Beginning the Lesson

Dr. Alexander Macleod had a friend who was teaching a school of black children in Jamaica. This teacher had made a rule that every one who told a lie in school should receive seven strokes on the palm with a strap. One day a little girl named Lottie Paul told a lie, and was called before the school to receive her punishment. She was a sensitive little thing, and the teacher was very sorry to strike her, but he must carry out the rule of the school. Her cry of pain when she received the first stroke went to his heart; he could not go on with her punishment. Yet he could not pass by her sin, and this is what he did. He looked over to the boys and asked, "Is there any boy who will bear the rest of Lottie's punishment?" And as soon as the words were spoken, up started a little fellow called Jim, who said, "Please, sir, I will!" And Jim went to the desk and received without a cry, the six remaining strokes.

Dr. Macleod tells the story, and adds: "And it was the vision of a Heart gentler still than that of this brave boy, but gentle with the same kind of gentleness, which filled the master's eyes with tears that day, and made him close his books, and bring his scholars round about his desk, and tell them of the Gentle One, who long ago bore the punishment of us all." The story he told them is ours today.

Pilate's Wife at Golgotha

"Procla," Pilate cried as she entered the great hall, "where have you been? I have been mad with fear for you. With the street full of frenzied crowds and this intolerable eclipse happening just now! I have had twenty soldiers out searching."

"I couldn't tell you before I left, Pontius," his wife answered, "for you would not have permitted it. And I had to do it. It was the least thing I could do, for I must share with you the weight of this guilt. You sentenced him to death. I could only stay beside him as he died. I have been at Golgotha. There were other women. He often looked toward us. I wish he could have known who I was—understood that I was suffering with him those awful hours.

"Just before he died he raised his head. The darkness was lifting and we could see the glory on it. And he spoke clear and strong so that everyone heard: 'Father,' he said, 'into thy hands I commend my spirit.'

"At that ghastly time, when he was passing through the excruciation of such a death, he could look up into the face of his God and called him Father! Pontius, don't you see what that must mean? A Father in Heaven! Not able to save his children from all pain, not even sometimes from tragedy, when all the threads of his world are so intertangled. But still their Father. Supporting them by his love. And suffering with them in the extremities of their lives.

"Oh, Pontius, there at the foot of that unspeakable cross of agony I found him! I found my God. I seemed all at once to see the great Heart of the universe through Jesus' eyes."—Agnes Sligh Turnbull, in Far Above Rubies.

Why Jesus Chose the Cross

A great ocean liner was on fire. Hastily the boats were lowered and filled, and

in the excitement and confusion all of the boats had left but one, when on the deck a woman and her ten-year-old boy appeared. "Too late, we cannot take you; our boat is already dangerously loaded," was the word shouted up to her. Then in their compassion those in the boat offered to run the risk of taking one of them, both could not possibly be received. At once the mother pressed the boy to her, kissed him, and said, "Good-bye, my child, the Lord keep you till we meet in heaven. Tell your father that I stayed behind to save you." Then she lowered him into the boat. That boy is now a man, but he has never forgotten that his mother gave her life for him.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. What that mother did, multitudes of others have done throughout the world, sacrificed themselves for love of others. But the greatest example of self-sacrificing love the world has ever known was the willing death of the Son of man and Son of God for the sins of the world. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

How a Boy in India Learned the Meaning of the Cross

A boy told Gandhi something which the latter found out to be a lie. Gandhi called the school together and solemnly said, "Boys, I am sorry to find out that one of you is a liar. As punishment I am going off and fast today." That may be passed with a smile, but not if you knew the dead earnestness of Gandhi and the sheer moral weight of the man. There could not have been a more terrific punishment, for long after any physical pain from physical punishment would have died away there would persist the spiritual pain from the lashings of conscience awakened by the sufferings of the man who loved him. In the light of Gandhi's acting thus it becomes easy for them to step up from the thought that if one man would take on himself suffering to bring a boy back from a lie to the truth, then if there were One divine enough and holy enough, he might take on his soul the very sin of a whole race to bring us back to good and to God. The cross thus bursts into meaning when lighted up by this lesser act.—The Christ of the Indian Road, by E. Stanley Jones.

Should We Not Love Him?

There is a fine tale told of the old days before there was gunpowder and when war was a simpler thing than it is now. The enemy came swooping down in the darkness and surrounded a lonely garrison, and hoped to shoot the men down or starve them into surrendering. Yet the soldiers in the garrison had friends, strong friends and many of them; only the soldiers couldn't tell them the danger they were in, or call for their help, without lighting the cresset fire which hung by its chain high up where the enemy would see the man who tried to kindle it, and would shoot him down at the first spark he made. But if ever they were to be delivered that signal must be made; the cresset fire must be kindled.

One man at length stepped forth, and said he would fire the beacon. He knew what it meant; ah, yes! he knew; but he was ready, quite ready. He kneeled and prayed and then sprang to his feet, grasped the torch, leaped on the ramparts, and climbed to the beacon, while a shower of arrows came whining upon him. But the beacon was fired. Its flame shot up like a cry for help, and their friends understood it and marched to the rescue, and drove back the enemy, and delivered the garrison.

But the poor fellow who had kindled the beacon, where was he? Lying asleep in a soldier's grave. He had died to save his comrades.

Was there a soldier of them all that night who did not love and honor the man who had saved them? No, not one.

And "Christ died for us"—died for you, died for me, died for everybody. Shouldn't we love him? shouldn't we praise him? shouldn't we live for him? Ah, yes, we should.—J. Reid Howatt.

Sentence Sermons

Thy unblemished body on the tree
Was bared and broken to atone
For me, for me
Thy little one.—Christina Rossetti.

There is but one result that can warrant the agony of Calvary, and that is our being conquerors over sin.—Mark Guy Pearse.

REVIEW: JESUS THE SAVIOR

GOLDEN TEXT: Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Joshua 24.15

DEVOTIONAL READING Zephaniah 3.14-17

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation and let all pupils who recognize the allusion signify this. Then ask one of them to tell the lesson to which it refers, or ask the other pupils questions about it.

Not always on the mount may we
Rapt in the heavenly vision be;
The mount for vision—but below
The paths of daily duty go.—F. L. Hosmer.

Render to all what is due them, whether you agree with them wholly or not. Give to secular authorities the obedience which their office requires.—Dean Stanley.

Sometimes the man has been vouchsafed a vision, but he has lost himself in its contemplation. It is as if he had tarried in the mount and had never returned.—George Wharton Pepper.

Everything in Palestine which can be walled in and roofed over is shut away from the sun and the stars, and generally with a stall for traffic in photographs, picture postal cards, and souvenirs. The money-changers have got back into the temple again.—Gaius Glenn Atkins.

"In memory of the Savior's love
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble, contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest."

We see thee lifted up as a sign drawing all men unto that hapless hill with the resistless power of Love Divine.—Martha Foote Crow.

"The Missionary Union of America once prepared spices and oils for the embalming of the work in Telugu, but where they prophesied death, there has been abundant life, and the joy of their disappointed belief has filled all Christendom."

There is a sighing in the pallid sprays
Of these old olives, as if they kept
Their pitying watch, in Nature's faithful ways,
As on that night when the disciples slept.
—Katherine Lee Bates.

A photographer makes his sensitive plate, exposes it to just the ray of light that he chooses, dips it into the proper solutions, and holds it up to the light to see if his picture is there. What else did this Great Teacher do on that day but hold up those souls to the light to find out if the reflection of the Son of God were fastened there?—J. M. Stifler.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults

1. Why did Jesus make his triumphal entry of Jerusalem? 2. What are the leading events of the last week of Christ's life? 3. What does the kingship of Christ mean for us? 4. What meaning has the Lord's Supper for us? 5. What did Jesus teach about wealth? About service? 6. About greatness? About self-denial? 7. What active and what passive traits of character can we discern in Jesus? 8. What evidences of Jesus' humanity have these lessons shown? 9. What evidences of Jesus' divinity have these lessons shown? 10. Was Jesus a success?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Where in the life of Jesus do the Quarter's lessons begin and where do they end? 2. What is the best thing that Peter ever said? 3. Who were the three who witnessed the Transfiguration? 4. What man knew the right but failed to do it? 5. When is a person great according to the teaching of Jesus? 6. What did Jesus do and teach about little children? 7. Where is the Garden of Gethsemane, and for

what is it remembered? 8. What did the centurion at the cross say about Jesus? 9. Who were the three women who came to the tomb that first Easter morning, what did they propose doing, and what did they learn? 10. What does Jesus mean to you?

QUESTIONS UPON THE GOSPEL OF MARK

1. What connection had Mark the writer with Jesus? 2. With Paul? 3. What else do we know about him? 4. What was the source of his knowledge of Christ's life? 5. When and for whom was his Gospel written? 6. What was Mark's aim in writing it? 7. What striking characteristic of his writing can you mention? 8. With what does he begin? 9. What parables does the Gospel give? 10. What discourse? 11. How many verses are found only in Mark, and what do they tell us? 11. How large a part of the Gospel is devoted to a record of the last week of Christ's life? 12. Why did Augustine assign to this Gospel the symbol of a man? 13. Give a brief outline of the Gospel. 14. What realistic touches does this Gospel contain which are not found in the other Gospels?

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. The Gospel According to Mark, its Purpose and Characteristics.
2. The Story of Holy Week.
3. The Life of Christ as a School for the Training of The Twelve.
4. The Teaching of Jesus Concerning Himself.
5. The Achievements of Jesus.
6. Some Characteristics of Jesus' Ministry.
7. Jesus' Methods as a Teacher.
8. Final Conflicts in the Life of Jesus.
9. Why I Am a Follower of Jesus.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. An Account of the Triumphal Entry as Given by an Eye-witness.
2. An Account of the Arrest and Trial of Jesus.
3. A Parable Told by Jesus and its Meaning.
4. Some Questions Jesus Was Asked and His Answers.
5. A Lesson in Humility.
6. Two Men who were Selfish.
7. Being a Christian at Home.
8. Jesus' Standard of Greatness.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEWS

Ask pupils to complete these statements of Jesus and tell the occasion that led him to utter each:

1. If any man would come after me . . . 2. Suffer the little children . . . 3. One thing thou lackest . . . 4. Whosoever would become great . . . 5. Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God . . . 6. This is my blood . . . 7. What doth it profit a man . . . 8. What therefore God hath joined . . . 9. My house shall be called . . . 10. Render unto Cæsar . . . 11. Abba, Father, all things . . . 12. Whosoever would save his life . . . 13. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom . . . 14. How hard it is for them that trust in riches . . . 15. Have ye not read even this scripture: the stone . . . 16. The Son of man must suffer many . . . 17. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered . . .

Give a copy of the following questions to each pupil and ask him to take it home and honestly answer the questions for himself:

1. Am I governed by the principles of Jesus? 2. Would I follow the teachings of Jesus if thereby I should lose money or position? 3. Am I a Christian in the home? 4. Am I using my money wholly for myself? Am I using it in the best way possible? 5. Am I doing my duty as a good citizen? 6. Am I willing to follow Christ in denying self? 7. Have I some great cause at heart to further which I am giving my best efforts? 8. Can I rightly answer Jesus' question, "Who say ye that I am?"

Map illustrating the
ACTS of the APOSTLES
and the EPISTLES
SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 150 200
1st Journey of Paul the Apostle
2nd " " " " "
3rd " " " " "
Journey to Rome of Paul the Apostle
Longitude East from Greenwich
ROME
Three Taverns
Market of Appius
Capua
Via Appia
Puteoli
ITALY
Apennines
ADRIATIC SEA
Dyrrachium
Brundisium
Tarentum
IONIAN SEA
SICILY
Messina
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
THRACE
BLACK SEA
Sangarius R.
Byzantium
Propontis
Sea of Marmora
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
Halys R.
Tavium
Ancyra
Pessinus
KINGDOM OF POLEMON
Caesarea
Tyana
Antitaurus
Cilician Gates
CAPPADOCIA
GALATIA
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
Tarsus
Syrian Gates
Antioch
Seleucia
Laodicea
Tripolis
Sidon
Damascus
Ptolemais
Caesarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
SYRIA AND CILICIA AND PHOENICIA
Lebanon Mts.
Cyprus R.
CILICIA TRACHEIA
KINGDOM OF ANTIOCHUS
COMMAGENE
Cilicia Campestris
Taurus Mts.
Cyprus
Salamis
Paphos
Myra
Rhodes
Patara
Cnidus
Cos
Miletus
Colossae
Laodicea
Ephesus
Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis R.
Philadelphia
Apamea
Hierapolis
Antioch
Pisidia
Pamphylia
Perga
Side
Cestrus R.
Attalia
Lycia
Caria
Mitylene
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
Mysia
M. Ida
Lesbos
Chios
Samos
Patmos
Ecclesiae
Philippi
Neapolis
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Thessalonica
Beroea
Mt. Olympus
Pindus Range
Via Egnatia
Illyricum
Macedonia
Achaia
Corinth
Cenchreae
Athens
Gulf of Corinth
Greece
Cyrene
CYRENE
LIBYA
Alexandria
EGYPT
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CRETE
Phoenice
CAUDA
Fair Havens
C. Salmone
Rhodes
Cyrene
Longitude East from Greenwich

ANTIOCH OF SYRIA

THIRD QUARTER

LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

Lesson 1—July 1

THE EARLY LIFE OF SAUL

GOLDEN TEXT: Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy Youth. Ecclesiastes 12.1

LESSON Deuteronomy 6.4-9; Philippians 3.4-6; Acts 22.3, 27, 28

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.33-40

DEUTERONOMY 6.4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart: 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

PHILIPPIANS 3.4 Though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

ACTS 22.3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day.

27 And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am *a Roman* born.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF A JEWISH BOY, Deuteronomy 6.4-9. Jehovah is the one absolute God: he must be loved with all the heart, soul and strength. The commandments must be laid to heart, must be taught to children, must be a constant subject of thought and conversation everywhere and at all times

—at home and when on the way, in the evening on lying down and in the morning on rising. They must be bound upon the hand for a sign, and worn as bands (frontlets) between the eyes. See Light from Oriental Life. This "sign" was worn upon the arm in much the same way as children tie knots in their handkerchiefs, or change rings on their fingers, to remind the wearer of something he should not forget.

"Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget" (Kipling).

This was the teaching of Deuteronomy, and we may be sure that this was the instruction which Paul received while a lad in his father's house at Tarsus.

"Oh, if our children all were brought
Betimes to God and duly taught
His law to honor and obey,
Pre-eminently blest were they;
And bound as with a sevenfold cord
Would be our nation to the Lord."

II. PAUL'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS EARLY LIFE, Philippians 3.4-6. There were many circumstances in his life of which he might well be proud, Paul asserts in his letter to the Philippians; he had greater cause for pride in his ancestry than had many others who boasted of their descent. He was circumcised when eight days old, he belonged to the stock of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Dr. Ozora S. Davis translates these items of which Paul is proud into the corresponding terms of our own day: "I became a member of the Christian Church at an early age; my ancestors came to America at the very beginning of the settlement; they were descended from the bluest blood of England; and I belong to a family that has given ministers, teachers and professional men to the service of the country from the beginning, including ancestors in all the great wars that have been fought for freedom in America."

"In Paul as perhaps in no other historic personality, the three main currents of ancient history met. He was a Jew, but his Hebrew faith had a Hellenic (Greek) form and a Roman environment. On the cross of Jesus an inscription was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, as though the three types of contemporary civilization met at its feet. What was thus written on the cross of Jesus was written on the life of Paul, and this unprecedented convergence of influences and traditions prepared the way for the expansion, through the work of one man, of a provincial sect into a cosmopolitan religion" (Francis Greenwood Peabody).

Paul was also proud of his training as a Pharisee. He had been so zealous for the law and the traditions of his fathers that he had persecuted the church; and as for the righteousness which the law required, he was blameless. In his letter to the Galatians he wrote: "Ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

Paul was brought up in the narrowest sect of the Jews—a Pharisee of the Pharisees. As one writer puts it, he was educated as sternly and as strictly as our Puritan ancestors in New England; "in austerity and alertness he was a combination of Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin." "In his fundamental attitude and outlook, Paul was always a Pharisee. The Pharisees were the most devout and spiritual people in the Jewish Church. They most stressed religious values, and placed a spiritual interpretation on the universe and life." Even as a Christian he "was glad that he belonged to the sect which was most loyal to God, and most zealous in its efforts to bring the whole world to him. He was a Pharisee and a Christian at the same time" (C. E. Jefferson).

III. FURTHER FACTS WHICH PAUL GIVES ABOUT HIMSELF, Acts 22.3, 27, 28. (1) He was a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, "a citizen of no mean city," (Acts 21.39); educated at Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel; well instructed according to the strict law laid down by the Jewish fathers; as zealous for God as were all Jews of that day. He began his studies with Gamaliel at the age of fourteen or fifteen, for that was the Jewish custom.

Gamaliel was one of the most famous of the Jewish rabbis. He was "had in honor of all the people," Acts 5.34, and when he died men said, "The glory of the law has ceased." He was a member of the Sanhedrin, and it was he who, when the apostles

were imprisoned and escaped, and the authorities "were minded to slay them," stopped them by declaring that "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them." And they could not.

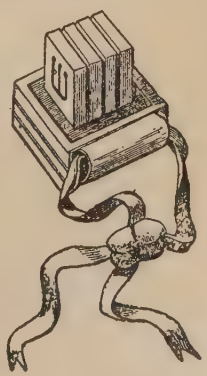
"Memorizing the text of the Old Testament and of commentaries on that text; reciting the approved interpretations; allegorizing the history so that external events were transmuted into spiritual lessons,—all these ingenious devices for disguising history and exalting tradition must have been appropriated by the receptive mind of the growing boy."

(2) Though a Jew, he was a Roman by birth. There were three classes among the people of the Roman Empire: citizens, Latins, and foreigners. The citizens had full political and other civic rights and immunities; the Latins had partial rights; and the foreigners had none at all. Claudius Lysias, the chief captain at Jerusalem to whom Paul was talking (see The Historical Background) told Paul that he had paid a large sum for the privilege of Roman citizenship. "During the Empire imperial parasites and freedmen were sometimes allowed to sell their title of citizenship, just as James IV sold patents for baronetcies" (Lindsay). Lysias' remark shows a vague doubt in his mind: he had had to pay so large a sum, how could this man before him have had money enough to buy his citizenship? "But I am a Roman born," Paul proudly returned, and Lysias must have felt the quiet superiority implied by this *But*. Evidently Paul was not a Roman citizen merely because he was a native of Tarsus, for Lysias knew that Paul was from Tarsus when he ordered him scourged (Acts 22.39), and he would not have ordered this penalty inflicted upon a Roman citizen. Paul's father may have been given the citizenship because of some special service, and Paul inherited his rights. In New Testament times those who held the honor of Roman citizenship formed the aristocracy of each city, as it was not until 212 A. D., that all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were given the citizenship. His Roman citizenship was of great value to Paul on his journeys; it was recognized by the politarchs at Philippi; the governor of Achaia at Corinth, the Asiarchs at Ephesus, the governors Felix and Festus in Judea, and the centurion Julius on the Alexandrian ship bound for Rome.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Hear, O Israel; Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, Dt. 6.4. This passage, verses 4-9, is called by the Jews *Shema,* from the first word of verse 4 in Hebrew, translated *Hear.* The Shema is still recited, together with Dt. 11.13-21 and Num. 15.37-41, as the first act of worship in the Jewish synagogue, and twice a day by every adult male Jew. In the synagogue the whole congregation repeat the word *Achad* for several minutes.

These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart, Dt. 6.6. As these words are figurative, and denote an undeviating observance of the divine commands, so also the commandment which follows, to write the words upon the doorposts of the house and also upon the gates, are to be understood spiritually; and the literal fulfillment of such a command could only be a praiseworthy custom and well-pleasing to God when resorted to as the means of keeping the commandments of God constantly before the eye. The practise, however, is not only met with in the Mohammedan countries of the East at the present day, but also was a common custom in ancient Egypt.—Delitzsch.



A Phylactery

Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, Acts 22.3. This is figurative language, expressing the fact that he was instructed by Gamaliel, and yet it was literally true also, for he sat as students still do in the East, cross-legged on a mat on the floor, "at the feet" of his teacher. Visitors to the great Moslem University of El Azhar, Cairo, do not find students sitting in seats in orderly class rooms, but groups of men sitting on the floors and pavements everywhere.

Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes, Dt. 6.8. At prayer the Jew wore two tephillin, one fastened inside the left forearm and the other, called the phylactery, fastened on the forehead.

They were small boxes, about a cubic inch in size, in which were pieces of parchment containing the words of Dt. 6.4-9 and also Ex. 13.1-10, 11-16 and Dt. 11.13-21.

And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates, Dt. 6.9. "The mezuza was a small oblong box containing the passage Dt. 6.4-9, which was fastened to the right-hand door-post of the house and of each inhabited room, in accordance with the injunction. It had a beautiful significance as a reminder of the presence of God in the house, and the obligation of all the inmates to keep his holy law; but it had also been degraded into a mere charm to keep off evil spirits during the night."

On the outside of the parchment the word *Shaddai* (Almighty) is written, and a portion of the box or tube is cut out so that this word may be plainly seen. "Every pious Jew, as often as he passes the mezuza, touches the divine name with the finger of his right hand, then puts the finger to his mouth and kisses it, saying in Hebrew, 'The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and forevermore'; and when leaving it on a business expedition he says, after touching it, 'In thy name I go out and shall prosper.' "

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

In what Quarter of last year did we have lessons from The Acts? Who was the hero? How many chapters in The Acts tell about the growth of the Church under Peter's leadership? Who wrote The Acts? What other book of the Bible did he write?

From the Gospels to The Acts

The story of the Gospels is an unfinished drama. Its historic interest is pivoted upon the conflict between the new liberating message of the Kingdom and the religious system presented by the Pharisees. There is a clear issue: on the one hand the Way of the Nazarene, with his startling assertions and denials, on the other hand all that the piety of the time prized as the essentials of a revealed religion. The plot thickens, until in the dim morning light of the fatal Passover the antagonists stand face to face—a nation on the one side, the rejected Prophet on the other. The clash comes, and when the earthquake and the eclipse are past, the Established Order remains supreme. The gospel of emancipation has been added to the limbo of shattered illusions, and Pharisaism is triumphant.

That is the crisis of the movement. But it is evident that the plot is not finished. The whole development has pointed forward, to this situation certainly, but not to this as conclusion. In the intoxicating joy of Easter morning the defeat is forgotten, and the divine Victor holds the stage. But the faith of the Resurrection is so far a matter of personal religious experience; it is not, as yet, history. The Risen Christ is Victor over death; but he is not Victor over the Pharisees. For all the raptures of the disciples, the great system of Pharisaic Judaism stands as imposing, as self-sufficient as ever. Then comes Paul.—Harold Dodd, in The Meaning of Paul for To-day.

The Date of Paul's Birth

There are two statements, Acts 7.58 and Philemon 9, which give us the only clue we have as to the date of Paul's birth. In the former Paul is spoken of as "a young man" at the time of Stephen's martyrdom; in the latter, as "Paul the aged" at the time the Epistle was written. Stephen was stoned in 35 A. D., and Philemon is believed to have been written in 63 A. D. If Paul was born in 3 A. D., he would have been accounted young in 35 A. D., and aged in 65 A. D. This date is generally accepted.

The Background of Deuteronomy 6.4-9

The Book of Deuteronomy is a summary of what was most important for the Israelites to remember, both as regards what God had done for their nation in the past and as regards what they should do in the future. It has been described as A Great Sermon and A Popular Law Book. Our passage is from the final charge of Moses to the people assembled on the Plains of Moab within sight of the Promised Land.

The Background of Philippians 3.4-6

Paul's letter to the church at Philippi was written from Rome about 60 A. D. While he was a prisoner there awaiting trial he received from the Philippians money and

gifts as an expression of their affection for him as well as a provision for his needs, and in grateful acknowledgment of their kindness and love, he wrote this letter to them.

The Background of Acts 22.3, 27, 28

On his last journey to Jerusalem Paul walked about the streets of the city in the company of Trophimus, a Greek from Ephesus, and when later Paul was seen in the temple with others the Jews jumped to the conclusion that he had taken this Greek within its sacred enclosures. A mob seized him, dragged him out of the temple, and would have killed him had not the Roman Chief Captain rescued him from their hands. As he was being led up the stairs to the Castle of Antonia, Paul begged to be allowed to speak to the mob. Our verses taken from his address give details of his life.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In the time of Christ and of Paul Rome ruled the whole of the Mediterranean world. This was the whole civilized world, as men then supposed, although they knew that Alexander the Great had fought with men farther east who were called Indians, and they had heard that beyond India there was a land where silk grew on the leaves of the trees. Imperial Rome governed a larger proportion (not a larger number) of the human race than has ever been under one government. She ruled wisely, allowing the different races under her rule the maximum of local government and local usages and customs. From the Atlantic to the Euphrates there was peace.

Cilicia was a Roman province on the Mediterranean coast of the peninsula which we call Asia Minor. *Tarsus,* on the banks of the Cydnus River, was its capital. It was "no mean city," as Paul once said; the coins of Tarsus claim that it was the Metropolis of the East. Although Xenophon with his ten thousand men, the Cæsars, Alexander the Great, and Mark Antony and Cleopatra all visited Tarsus, the fame of the city rests upon the fact that here Paul was born.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

On Wednesday of this week we celebrate our independence as a nation. The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, suggests that the Sunday nearest Independence Day be celebrated as "Citizenship Sunday," and asks the churches to have a sermon on citizenship that morning. Our text to-day is intended primarily to introduce us to the life of Paul and bring to our minds his early training for service, but Paul's patriotic words afford an excellent text for the discussion of citizenship.

Patriotism knows no distinction of age. In all classes it will be well to-day to take time from the lesson about Paul's early life for a discussion of the reasons for our own love of city and nation, based upon Paul's pride in his native city and in his Roman citizenship. The Church school should have a share in cultivating love of country as well as love of God, in leading the pupils' instinctive regard for their country on to an intelligent, loyal patriotism. Suggestive articles will be found under each topic.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

INFLUENCES SHAPING PAUL'S EARLY LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of The Acts together are Luke's account of the Origin and Spread of Christianity. Volume II, The Acts, might be called The Acts of Peter and of Paul. In the Second Quarter of last year, under the leadership of Peter, we saw the Church established at Jerusalem and the gospel message preached in Judea and Samaria. Now, under the leadership of Paul, we shall see it carried "to the ends of the earth."

When was Paul born? Where? What do we know about the Tarsus of his day? It is interesting to note that Tarsus is now lighted by electricity, the power coming from the rapidly-flowing Cydnus River. "A copious stream of light many centuries ago came from Tarsus, and the dynamo was one called Paul, formerly Saul." How was Paul prepared for his great work?

Influences Shaping Paul's Early Life

In the Epistle to the Galatians (1.15) Paul says that God separated him, even from his mother's womb, and called him through his grace, that he might preach the gospel among the Gentiles. We understand this statement to mean that every circumstance of his birth and earliest environment and education and all his experience up to the time of his conversion seemed to Paul marvelously and miraculously to have been calculated to prepare him for the greatest efficiency in his career as missionary among the nations. Looking back upon his life, Paul was ready to say that all things had worked together for his good in getting him ready, all unconsciously though it was, for the work God had for him to do. We can see some very clear reasons for his coming to such a conclusion.

I. Jewish Descent. Paul was born in a Jewish family and was reared in the Jewish faith. Since Jesus was a Jew, and the Christian faith was born among the Jews and was propagated wholly from them in the beginning, it was essential that the most successful missionary in the early church should be a Jew. His race affinities enabled Paul to begin his ministry in each city in the synagogue, in an established meeting-place, with a congregation ready assembled and accustomed to religious discussion. He preached by preference to the Jews, and turned to the Gentiles only when the Jews had refused to heed his message. All the first Christian missionaries were Jews, and Paul never would have been able to maintain himself among them as their equal and to establish himself at last as their superior if he himself had not been a Jew.

Then, too, among his own countrymen he had certain claims to superiority.

(1) He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and there were several reasons why that would mean much to a Jew. Benjamin was the son of the favored wife, and Benjamin alone among the patriarchs had been born in the Chosen Land. The first king of Israel had been taken from the tribe of Benjamin, and the apostle had been named after him. His parents had called him Saul; and Paul was proud of that fact, and he never forgot that he was the namesake of a king. The Saul of Old Testament history towered head and shoulders above his fellows, and had been a right royal soul. This second Saul was to tower above his fellows in intellectual and spiritual accomplishments, and he would be a king among the New Testament leaders of the world reformation.

(2) Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was a Pharisee. He belonged to that sect among the Hebrews which was notorious for its scrupulous observance of all the religious ritual, for its patriotism and its zeal, for its piety and devotion. The Pharisees were all zealots, but among them Paul became conspicuous for his zeal. He came to be the chosen instrument of the Sanhedrin to persecute and to annihilate the Christian Church.

(3) No one could find any fault with Saul's reputation as a legalist. He met all the requirements of Pharisaic righteousness. He claimed in his later life that he had been blameless as judged by their standards, and no one ever disputed his claim. He said to King Agrippa, "My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." When the chief captain had rescued Paul from the mob at Jerusalem he asked his prisoner who he was, and Paul's first words in answer were, "I am a Jew." Then the chief captain permitted Paul to speak to the people, and Paul began his defense to his own countrymen, with the same words, "I am a Jew." Paul always considered that fact a chief asset in his missionary career. If he had been asked to point out the elements which made for his apostolic equipment and success, in all probability he would have begun with the statement that he had been born in a Jewish home and trained in the Jewish faith.

II. Roman Citizenship. Paul's father was a Roman citizen, and Paul was born into all the political privileges of the Roman state. What an advantage that was to him in all his apostolic career! He always was disposed to regard the imperial power as the friend of the Christian faith, protecting it from Jewish persecution and saving him again and again from danger to his person and life. He made the most of his Roman citizenship whenever necessity demanded the declaration of it. He was a Jew, but he also was a Roman; and to be a Roman was a great advantage and distinction to a Jew.

III. Greek Environment. Paul was born and reared in Tarsus, a Greek city of Asia Minor. A Jew by heredity and a Roman by citizenship, he was a Greek by environment. He united in himself the three great influences of that age. He was

at home equally with the Jewish religion and the Roman politics and the Greek culture.

(1) It was worth something to Paul to have been born in a city. He was at home in cities. He was city-bred, and he liked best to labor in the cities. He was lonesome in the country, and he never cared to stop there long. He passed through it only that he might reach another city. He was used to crowds and to many intermingling nationalities and to the sight of great interests well managed for the good of the community. His city-training helped him to become the great organizer of Gentile Christiandom, and to meet the many peoples among whom he labored without embarrassment and with something of familiarity. No one of the Galilean peasants in that original apostolic company had any such training; and no one of them was prepared, as Paul was, to meet all classes with confidence and to win different nationalities to Christ.

(2) It was worth still more to have been born in a university city. Paul grew up in an intellectual atmosphere. He must have met multitudes of students in the streets of Tarsus, and an active mind like that of Paul would be impressed with the value of an education, and would be sure to pick up an appreciation for the Greek culture.

IV. Trade. Paul was taught a trade. He was a tentmaker; and we know how often the knowledge of this trade was of practical assistance to him in his ministry. He could work at it wherever he went. A fisherman could not find employment everywhere. A tentmaker could keep busy almost anywhere in the Orient, and just as well inland as on the seashore.

V. Schooling. At Jerusalem, where he was sent to finish his education and to be made a rabbi, Paul entered the school of Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel and the greatest master of his day.

(1) With Gamaliel. Gamaliel was a generous-hearted, broad-minded man, more tolerant than many of his contemporaries. He was principally responsible for the introduction of Greek learning among the Jews. The rabbis said, "If you would study the Greek wisdom, you must first find an hour that is neither day nor night in which to study it." Gamaliel defied this popular prejudice. His son Samuel says, "There were one thousand students in my father's school, five hundred of whom studied Greek wisdom and five hundred Jewish law." It was into this school that Paul came, and it was here that he advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his own age among his countrymen, even as he already was far in advance of them in his knowledge of Greek literature and life.

(2) With the Scriptures. There was only one textbook here, as there had been only one in the synagogue school at Tarsus. From a babe Saul had known the sacred writings. As a boy he had committed many portions of them to memory. Now as a young man he heard them expounded by the highest authority. He gave his days and his nights to the study of them. They were a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. He mastered their contents. Their theology and their phraseology became so familiar to him that they were in his mind and on his lips continually. No one can read the Pauline epistles without being impressed with the fact that Paul thinks in quotations from the Old Testament.—Condensed from Paul and his Epistles, by Professor D. A. Hayes.

Paul's Life as a Pharisee

He fasted twice a week: on the fifth day, because on that day Moses had gone up into the mount; on the second day, because on that day Moses had come down again. His year was full of fastings. He celebrated in fasts almost every great calamity in the national history: the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the burning of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the murder of Gedaliah by Ishmael, the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. He was scrupulous about the Sabbath. He would carry no bundle on the Sabbath day; would not walk any considerable distance, and never, under any circumstances, for pleasure or recreation. He was scrupulous about the Jewish feasts as well. He was always at the synagogue when the Sabbath day came round. Whenever he returned from a walk, the first thing he did was to get the ewer and basin of water that stood in every Jewish household, and to wash at least his hands. He might have touched a Gentile; then he would have been unclean, and had he eaten with unclean hands, the uncleanness would have entered into him and degraded him.—Lyman Abbott, in The Life and Letters of Paul the Apostle.

Paul was City-Born and Bred

The different effects which their early environment had upon Jesus and Paul have

often been mentioned. As Professor James Stalker notes, the words of Jesus are redolent of the country and teem with pictures of still beauty or homely toil—the lilies of the field, the sheep following the shepherd, the sower in the furrow, the fishermen drawing their nets. But the language of Paul is impregnated with the atmosphere of the city and alive with the tramp and hurry of the streets. His imagery is borrowed from scenes of human energy and monuments of cultivated life—the soldier in full armor, the athlete in the arena, the building of houses and temples, the triumphal procession of the victorious general.

Citizenship Sunday

(See A Suggestion to Teachers.) Your country is all that surrounds you, all that has reared and nourished you, everything that you have loved. That land you see, those houses, those trees, those smiling girls that pass, that is your country. The laws that protect you, the bread which rewards your toil, the words you exchange, the joy and sadness which comes to you from men and the things amid which you live, that is your country! The little chamber where you once saw your mother, the recollections she has left you, the earth where she reposes, that is your country. You see it, and you breathe it everywhere! I imagine, my son, your affections and your needs, your recollections and your gratitude, all united under one name, and that name will be "Your Country!"—Emil Sonvestre.

Giving Citizenship to the Foreigners Who Come to America

The applicant for citizenship should be made to realize that it is a privilege which he may forfeit if he does not perform its duties conscientiously.

I believe that every man who wishes to become a citizen ought to be willing to take pains and make sacrifices, if necessary, to gain that end. Citizenship is too valuable a possession to be thrown at people, and it is a mistaken notion to believe that because a man has taken out his naturalization papers he is necessarily a patriot. In fact, we know that the two are not identical, and I can easily imagine myself loving this country and being ready to sacrifice for it even had I not the sometimes doubtful privilege of voting.

There ought to be a more searching test applied than the mere answering of a few questions which may be learned by rote. No man should be allowed to become a citizen unless his conduct, during five years' residence in this country, has proved that he is already an American in spirit; that he knows the meaning of liberty and has not abused it; and that he is capable of coöperating with Americans in realizing that freedom. He ought to be asked to prove that he has left behind him Europe's racial, religious and national animosities and prejudices. He ought not to become a child of this democracy, and as often happens an added care, until he has proved that he knows its meaning and has lived up to it.—Edward A. Steiner, in The Confessions of a Hyphenated American.

Nationalism and Internationalism

Internationalism, to my mind, will never become a reality until nationalism itself becomes moral, law-abiding, God-fearing. Students of history have long been cognizant of the fact that nations, as such, will tolerate and commit acts which would bring down upon individuals all the onus of a long-established system of jurisprudence. Are nations, then, imperfectly developed as they are at present, capable of joining together and losing their identity for the general good? No more than a group of selfish, egotistic, grasping men are able to form a society in which unselfishness, altruism, and generosity should be ruling principles.—Elias Lieberman.

He serves his country best
Who lives a pure life and doeth righteous deeds,
And walks straight paths, however others stray,
And leaves his sons an uttermost bequest.
A stainless record which all men may read.—Susan Coolidge.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Tarsus, Paul's Own City. See Part II of The Cities of St. Paul, by W. M. Ramsay.

2. Paul's childhood and education. See Chapter II of Conybeare and Howson's Life of Paul; Part I of David Smith's Life and Letters of St. Paul; Chapter III of Farrar's Life of Paul; Chapters I and II of Paul of Tarsus, by T. R. Glover.

3. The Christian ideal of citizenship.

Questions for Pupils to Think About

1. Paraphrase Stephen's defense. 2. What parallels to the action of the mob that stoned Stephen have we in our American life? 3. In what way was Paul responsible for Stephen's death? 4. What words of Stephen were most likely to be remembered by Paul as long as he lived? 5. Remembering the influence of Paul on the world since his conversion, how much honor may Christians rightly pay to Stephen's influence on Paul? 6. On what occasion did Paul speak of his persecution of the Christians? 7. In his words of Acts 22, was he excusing his earlier actions?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL'S TRAINING FOR SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson

In 1909 the Turks massacred many Armenian Christians at Tarsus in Asia Minor. While the massacre was going on, some of the Christians fled to St. Paul's Institute, a school taught by Christian missionaries. There they were safe, for the school was founded and supported by Americans, and the Turks dared not scale the walls which surrounded the compound. The refugees filled the classrooms and dormitories and campus, some five thousand of them. Dr. Christie, the head of the Institute, was away at the time, but Mrs. Christie was "a ministering angel to them all." Afterwards these people named their sons Christie, and their daughters Christina in honor of their beloved friends, and today many young people in Tarsus bear those names.

Tarsus is the city in which was born the hero of the lessons we are to study for six months. His parents named him Saul, for they were Jews and Saul was an honored name in Jewish history. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe which gave to Israelites their first king whose name was Saul. When first we hear of our hero in The Book of The Acts he is called Saul, but soon thereafter he is known as Paul, which was his Roman name. Paul was a Roman citizen. Under what circumstances did he proudly proclaim his Roman citizenship?

Paul's Early Education

Paul's people were Israelites, as we have said, and, like Timothy, he must have been taught the Old Testament Scriptures "from a babe." What does our text from Deuteronomy say the ancient Israelites were commanded to teach their children?

When Paul was a lad about fourteen years of age he was sent to Jerusalem to be taught by a great rabbi. What was the rabbi's name? In Paul the Hero, Dr. Rufus M. Jones gives the following interesting conversation between the boy Paul and Rabbi Gamaliel, which, while not a true dialogue, gives us nevertheless a true account of what Paul knew in those days. Paul had just come to Jerusalem and had gone to the great rabbi to be instructed by him.

"Dost thou know the commandments?" asked the teacher.

"I know them all," answered the youth. "I have said them many times to my mother in Tarsus."

"Dost thou know what the law requires a faithful son of Abraham to do on the Sabbath day?"

The youth surprised his teacher as he ran through the long and complicated lists of things that a faithful Jew might do and might not do on the Sabbath day. At last the teacher stopped the boy and gravely asked, "where has thou studied?"

"With my father and with my mother in the long evenings at Tarsus. My father is one of the wisest and one of the most strict of all the tribe of Benjamin and my mother is like the woman of whom the wise king Lemuel wrote in the Roll of Proverbs. They have taught me many things, but I lack much and therefore have I come to Rabban Gamaliel."

"Canst thou recite the fifth book of Moses without a mistake?"

"I can recite every word duly, for the book itself says 'Lest ye forget.'"

"Thou hast done well, my son, and thou hast walked many steps in wisdom for one so young, but now thou must learn the authorities, thou must become skilful to interpret, thou must know the unwritten law and all the traditions of the Elders and Scribes and thou must fill thy mind with all the gathered wisdom of the great Rabbis until thou canst explain every passage in the rolls of the books which Jehovah our God has given us through the holy men of old. Thou must work with diligence, beginning early in the morning and continuing so long as the light lasts, and thou must spend years here with me until thou hast won the truth and until thou knowest clearly what brings God's righteousness to a man. Art thou ready to give up the

years of strong youth; art thou willing to lose the pleasures of the world; art thou able to endure the toil; wilt thou go all the way to the end with me?"

Paul stepped one step nearer, raised his fine face and his dark eyes full of eagerness to the master's face and calmly said: "Great Rabban, for that I come. I have left the things that are behind. I seek only one thing in this world—to be righteous, to know the whole secret of God, to be a perfect son of Abraham. Let it cost what it will, I follow where the wise Gamaliel shall take me, even to the end of the long road of truth."

Loyal Patriots

When Paul was rescued from the mob in the temple and stood on the stairway leading up to the Castle of Antonia, he asked the chief captain for permission to speak to him. In surprise the captain asked, "Dost thou know Greek?" for Paul had addressed him in that language. In answer Paul explained that he was a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, "a citizen of no mean city." Paul was a patriot, proud of his nationality, and of his native city.

Jesus Christ was very loyal to his country; and he had a special love for Jerusalem, its national city. Pathetic was his lament over her: "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood together under her wings, and ye would not!" And in the last week of his life he wept over Jerusalem as he spoke about the doom that awaited her.

Jesus taught his disciples obedience to the established government. You recall an earlier lesson in which he said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

The good American loves his country and is a loyal citizen in every relation of life. Here are four rules of conduct which were written for loyal boys and girls to keep in mind:

"1. I will be loyal to my family. In loyalty I will gladly obey my parents or those who are in their place. I will do my best to help each member of my family to strength and usefulness.

"2. I will be loyal to my school. In loyalty I will obey and help other pupils to obey those rules which further the good of all.

"3. I will be loyal to my town, my state, my country. In loyalty I will respect and help others to respect their laws and their courts of justice.

"4. I will be loyal to humanity. In loyalty I will do my best to help the friendly relations of our country with every other country, and to give to every one in every land the best possible chance."

Following an Ancient Example

A free college is maintained by New York as the summit of its public school system. The mayor, in addressing the graduating class one year, called on the young men to repay the city for their education by participating intelligently and conscientiously in its public affairs. The next day the class presented to the mayor an engrossed parchment setting forth their appreciation of his advice, and announcing that they had taken the oath of public service which was prescribed for the ancient Athenian youth.

That oath is one of the splendid products of the glorious days of Greece. When the Athenian youth reached the age of eighteen years, he was taken to the Temple of Agraulos, on the Acropolis, where he swore that he would never bring disgrace to his city by an act of cowardice or dishonesty, that he would fight, even if alone, for the ideals of the city, and that he would obey its laws, that it might be transmitted better and more beautiful than it had been handed down to him.

Sentence Sermons

I believe a man should be proud of the city in which he lives; and that he should so live that his city will be proud that he lives in it.—Lincoln.

I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.—The Psalmist.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About

1. How is Stephen described in Acts 6.3, 5, 8, 10? 2. What did Jesus say about those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake? (Mt. 5.10.) 3. When on his cross, what did Jesus say about his spirit? 4. What prayer did he voice for the men who killed him? 5. What does Paul say in Acts 26.9 about his sincerity in persecuting the followers of Christ? 6. Which is worse, to do wrong one's self, or to approve the wrongdoing of others? 7. Is one's conscience always dependable?

SAUL AND STEPHEN

GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2.10

LESSON Acts 7.54; 8.3; 22.3, 4, 19, 20; 26.4, 5, 9-11; Galatians 1.13, 14

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 116.12-19

ACTS 7.54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord,* and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

8.1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

ACTS 22.19 And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. STEPHEN'S ARREST AND DEFENSE, Acts 6.8 to 7.56. When the Greek-speaking Jews who were temporarily or permanently staying in Jerusalem attempted to dispute with one of the leaders among the disciples of Jesus, they found this man, Stephen, more than a match for all their logic and religious philosophy. Their original hatred of him, as a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6.5), and therefore full of grace and power, then turned into cunning malice. They resorted to calumny, raised up false witnesses against him, seized him and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

From Stephen's defense, 7.48, it is evident he had correctly taught that God could be worshiped not only in the temple, but everywhere. As was true with Jesus (Mk. 14.58), Stephen's words were distorted by false witnesses; he was accused of teaching that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the honored temple, and would change the revered Mosaic laws. Fearlessly, Stephen undertook his defense. Rehearsing the ancient history of Israel, he skillfully showed that God's revelation to his people had been progressive, that theirs was a spiritual religion, and that God had no need of an earthly temple. At first apparently fascinated by the clarity and truth of his words, his hearers were silently attentive; but as they caught the drift of his argument they displayed signs of anger which Stephen could not fail to see.

If, before the coming of the violent end which he saw approaching, Stephen was to apply his words to his hearers, he must speak quickly. "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit," he cried boldly. "Of the Righteous One ye have become murderers!" At once they "were cut to the heart"; they "gnashed on him with their teeth," that is, only by a "brute-like grinding of their teeth" were they able to restrain their unreasoning rage. But he, still filled with the Holy Spirit, saw "the heavens opened" (a familiar Jewish figure of speech signifying one's insight into divine things) "and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"; and, in apparently utter disregard of the frenzied fury around him, he told of what he saw.

II. STEPHEN'S DEATH AND BURIAL, Acts 7.57-60; 8.2. The effect was instantaneous. Dramatically stopping up their ears, as a sign that Stephen had spoken blasphemy in asserting that he whom they had crucified was now exalted to divine power, the Jews, now an insane mob, dashed upon the defenseless speaker. They overwhelmed him, they dragged him outside the city, they stoned him. They would not kill him lest they violate the laws of Moses—even in their fury they

thought of that; though they quite neglected the Roman law which had taken from them their Mosaic right to execute the death penalty.

"Think of the hollowness of a thing called religion that found expression in stoning a fellow-man! It seems incredible. Religion, what crimes have been committed in thy name! Think of the persecutors of the Huguenots; think of the burning of witches; think of the cold wickedness that stoned Stephen. We are not quite so crude today; we kill men with pen-points; we freeze them in an atmosphere of hate; we call them names that sting and burn" (John R. Ewers).

They stoned him, and Stephen "fell asleep." Before Stephen fell asleep in death, he kneeled down and cried aloud, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Who can fail to recall the similar words of Stephen's Lord, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"? By devout men Stephen was given an honorable burial.

When a man asked Joseph Parker what God did for Stephen, meaning that if there were a God he would have rescued Stephen, Dr. Parker answered, "What did God do for him? In that moment of suffering and helplessness God enabled Stephen to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' That was what the Almighty did, and in working this miracle of forgiveness in the spirit of the martyred man, God did more for Stephen than if he had sent a legion of angels to protect him from the ruffianism which wrought his death."

"In our lives we need to get Stephen's stedfast courage, and his clear-eyed faith, and his heaven-piercing hope, and his Godlike charity."

III. SAUL APPROVES OF STEPHEN'S DEATH, Acts 8.1. At the stoning the witnesses had placed their outer garments "at the feet of a young man named Saul." Here is the Bible's first mention of Saul the persecutor who became Paul the apostle. According to Greek custom, the term "young" could be applied to any man under forty years of age. "And Saul was consenting unto his death"; the Greek word means "consenting with pleasure." "What impression must that death of Stephen have made on a young man bigoted, but affectionate and open-hearted, and uneasy in mind? Here was a man being slowly butchered, and entirely at peace with God. Paul felt the contrast; he himself not at peace with God. The miserably slow process of the death left Paul the longer time to study the dying man, his face, his bearing, and the scene" (T. R. Glover).

" 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Not to the charge of those who stoned him? To whose charge then? Go and ask Paul. Later he answered that question: 'I stood by and consented.' He answered for himself only; but the day must come when all that wicked Council that sent Stephen away to be stoned, and all that city of Jerusalem, must hold up their hands and say, 'We, also, Lord—we stood by.' Ah! friends, under the simple memory of that dying saint's prayer for the pardon of his murderers is hidden the terrible truth that we all have a share in one another's sins" (George W. Cable, quoted by James Moffatt).

IV. SAUL LEADS IN PERSECUTING THE CHURCH, Acts 8.1, 3. The likelihood that the "devout men" who gave burial to Stephen's body were non-Christian Jews suggests that there was a division of opinion among the Jews concerning the death of Stephen. "Some of them, lamenting the brutality, tenderly buried him with great lamentation. Others, strangely stirred, broke out into wild and uproarious persecution of the Christians. Jerusalem was filled with the noise and the turmoil of persecution." And Paul must have been involved in the controversy from the very first; "he was not built to be neutral or even moderate." As a result of his leadership a systematic and intense harrying of the believers was carried on everywhere in Jerusalem. By his own efforts or through the energies of the other foes of the Christians, "Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women, committed them to prison, and in so doing spread abroad the gospel which he was trying to root out." For "the martyrdom of Stephen created a crisis in the history of the church." From this point onward Jerusalem was no longer the center of interest. The disciples scattered in all directions; but where they went, they preached the gospel. "The persecution, therefore, wrought the will of God; men's wickedness was made to serve the eternal purpose."

When John Huss, another Christian martyr, was bound to the stake in 1410,

an old peasant woman came up with a faggot which she asked to have added to the pile. It was carelessly flung on, but that did not satisfy her; she wanted it close up to the victim that it might help to consume him. "Have I ever harmed you and yours, that you are so bitter against me?" asked Huss. "Never, but you are a heretic," she returned. "Wood is scarce this year, and the winter, they say, is like to be a hard one. I can ill afford the faggot, but I would fain do God service by helping to rid the earth of an accursed heretic, and, therefore, I make the sacrifice." "O holy simplicity!" exclaimed the martyr, and added, as he drew the faggot to his side, "Perhaps this faggot may help to save us both." Huss saw that her zeal for God which had made her, like Paul, a persecutor, would, had she been enlightened as Paul later was, have made her a martyr, too.

The attempt to suppress faith by persecution always spreads it. "The severe persecutions of Decius, Valerian, Diocletian, and Maximian drove thousands of Christians to take refuge in the country; the last-named emperor, moreover, deliberately endeavored to eject Christians from the towns and condemned thousands to hard labor in the mines throughout the country. We know, thanks to the information of Dionysius of Alexandria and Eusebius, that in such cases communities sprang up in the country districts for the purpose of worship (Harnack).

V. PAUL TELLS OF HIS PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS, Acts 22.3, 4, 19, 20. Read also Gal. 1.13-23. By what we call the irony of fate—which may be the Providence of God—Saul himself was charged with the same offense as had led to Stephen's death (see the Historical Background).

The persecution in which Paul had a part rose up later to block Paul's first Christian efforts to serve him who had become his Master. His failure came, as he acknowledged, from the fact that "They themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee."

"And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed," Paul continued, "I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him."

"Dear men and women whom I sought and slew!
Ah, when we mingle in the heavenly places,
How will I weep, to Stephen and to you!" (F. H. W. Myers)

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

They cast him out of the city, and stoned him, verse 58. In front of the condemned man, according to Lightfoot, there went a crier announcing his crime, and at the place of execution the accused was asked to confess his crime to God. The Sanhedrin may have legally put to vote the question of sentencing Stephen, for though they and the people with them became a mob intent only on Stephen's death, at least part of the requirements seem to have been carried out. It may have been when asked to confess that Stephen had the opportunity of praying.

The Jewish Talmud describes the method of procedure: After a man has been condemned to be stoned they bring him good strong wine, and give him to drink, and bind his hands and feet, and lead him to the place of stoning. Then the witnesses take a great stone, large enough to cause death, and lay it upon his heart—all together, lest one should act before another—according to Dt. 17.7, "the hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him"; then all the Israelites may overwhelm him with stones.

He fell asleep, Acts 7.60. From very early times the Church held its martyrs in special honor; where they could, they erected chapels over their tombs. When they observed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper they were accustomed to recite the names of the martyrs, after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in his faith and fear." The day on which a martyr died was celebrated as his "birthday." "St. Stephen's Birthday" they called the day of this stoning; for, said they, was it not for him a birth into a better life?

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

How did Paul's early training make him bigoted? What was the attitude of the Pharisees toward Christ and his followers? In what way did Paul say he proved his zeal as a Pharisee?

From the Ascension of Christ to the Martyrdom of Stephen

During the several months which had passed since the ascension of Jesus, the early Christian Church had flourished notably. The great day of Pentecost added to the disciples "about 3,000 souls," "and the Lord added to them day by day." Many wonders were wrought by the apostles. But increasing fame brought a renewal of opposition. More than once Peter and John were imprisoned, only to be released in one way or another, and to continue with boldness and fidelity their work of healing and witnessing.

The Place and Time of Stephen's Martyrdom

The martyrdom of Stephen is assigned to 36 or 37 A. D. The fact that he was stoned to death by the people, though the procurator only could legally inflict the death penalty, suggests that this must have been the time, for then Pilate had been deposed, and another procurator had not been appointed.

The Place of Stoning

The charge against Stephen, and his defense, were made at the regular meeting-place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The place of stoning, to which he was hurried, according to rabbinical tradition, was north of the city at the hill now known as "The New Calvary."

The Background of Acts 22.3, 4, 19, 20

See the last lesson. While standing on the stairway leading up to the Castle of Antonia, Paul was allowed to address the frenzied mob below him till they clamored for his death. He had told them of his conversion on the way to Damascus, and that on his return to Jerusalem he fell into a trance in the temple, when Christ seemed to say to him, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me." Then Paul spoke the words of verses 19 and 20.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Though Paul could not recognize it until later, Stephen was his spiritual father; the mantle of the first martyr fell upon his shoulders, even as the garments of the witnesses were laid at his feet." Stephen might easily have feared that his life had been a failure—yet it produced a mighty Paul. Never let yourself despair of your Christian service—in the class or elsewhere. The Lord of the harvest can be depended on.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

STEPHEN'S INFLUENCE ON SAUL

Beginning the Lesson

Stephen, the young zealot, whose "face shone like the face of an angel," "full of faith and the Holy Spirit," had spoken "blasphemy against Moses and God," and "against this holy Place and the Law." He had even arraigned the high priest

and his followers as "betrayers and murderers." Saul, the young scholar, trained in academic restraint, could not degrade himself by joining the abusive mob; but, on the other hand, he could not, like Gamaliel, stand altogether aside. Stephen had brought his fate upon himself. Nothing could be more suggestive of the consenting lookers-on than the casual phrase, "The witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." He would not stone, but he quite approved of Stephen's murder. For the moment, he maintained the poise of judgment which Pilate exhibited in the case of Jesus. "I cannot find anything criminal about him," Pilate said, and then released the man they wanted, and Jesus he handed over to their will. Saul was of another mould. Neutrality was to him both cowardly and self-defeating. Consent to the death of Stephen was participation in the crime. There was but one course for an honest man and that was to take sides. Thereupon the young man threw himself into the attack. Armed with authority from the high priests he persecuted the church of God and harried it, shutting up many of the saints in prison.

The conflict between feeling and logic, which reappears throughout the spiritual history of Paul, had begun. His convictions drove him to acts from which every fiber of his sensitive soul recoiled. It was for such a man the only way to the light. He must go through this experience, not round it. Saul the persecutor is the forerunner of Paul the apostle.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in The Apostle Paul in the Modern World.

The Church Owes Paul to the Prayer of Stephen

A Spanish painter, in a picture of Stephen conducted to the place of execution, has represented Paul as walking by the martyr's side with melancholy calmness. He consents to his death from a sincere, though mistaken, conviction of duty: and the expression of his countenance is strongly contrasted with the rage of the baffled Jewish doctors and the ferocity of the crowd, who flock to the scene of bloodshed. Literally considered, such a representation is scarcely consistent either with Paul's conduct immediately afterwards, or with his own expressions concerning himself at the later periods of his life. But the picture, though historically incorrect, is poetically true. The painter has worked according to the true idea of his art in throwing upon the persecutor's countenance the shadow of his coming repentance. We cannot disassociate the martyrdom of Stephen from the conversion of Paul. The spectacle of so much constancy, so much faith, so much love, could not be lost. It is hardly too much to say with Augustine, that "The church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen."—Conybeare and Howson.

On Having an Influence

Much questionable advice is given to young people about having an influence. It is said that one must so conduct himself as to have a good influence over his companions, and of course there is much reasonableness in this exhortation. When, however, such advice involves anything like posing as an example, or being conscious of having an influence, then to any healthy-minded youth it appears to strike a false note of character. Such a youth answers, in the first place, that he is not fit to have an influence, that he is an unimportant person who has quite enough to do to take care of himself. Still further, such a young man views with suspicion the attitude of a model or a mentor. Posing or pretence of superiority are to him the most obnoxious of faults. The profession of doing good, Robert Louis Stevenson said, is one of the professions that is full.

When, however, one looks deeper into this matter of influence, he sees that it is not a question of choice or conscious design, but an inevitable and an inherent relation from which one cannot escape. A man need not concern himself to inquire whether he has an influence. All he has to do is to live, and the influence of his life will follow him as surely as his shadow. This is what Paul meant when he said that we were "members one of another." The foot does not say to the hand, "I will be a good example, and exercise a healthy influence on the hand"; for the members of the body are inevitably and inextricably bound together, so that health or disease in any part necessarily affects the whole. A young man, therefore, has but to go to his own way, as modestly and quietly as he may desire, and his influence on other members of the social body of which he is a part is as certain as the functions of physiology. The life of a whole community is sometimes transformed in its ideals and aims by a person who has never thought of posing as an influence or of setting an example, but has gone his own way, which others want to follow. There is a famous sermon of Horace Bushnell's, whose text is from

the end of the Fourth Gospel, where Peter and another disciple come to the sepulcher and hesitate. Then Peter, without exhortation or discussion, simply does the next thing that is set before him, and goes into the tomb; and the other disciple, who had come first to the door, takes courage and goes in also, and as the passage says, "sees and believes." No one ever thought less of being an example than Jesus Christ. He just goes his own way, and the world has seen that it is the way to go and falls into line behind. His method is not that of compulsion, but that of attraction. He does not drive; he draws.—Francis Greenwood Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Paul Verily Thought that He Ought to Put the Christians to Death

Brought up in the strictest sect of the Pharisees, Paul had been taught to believe that religion is scrupulous obedience to the laws of God; that these laws are supernaturally revealed; that this revelation is found only in the Old Testament writings and in the commentaries of the scribes; that the Jews were God's chosen children and the pagans were outcasts; that Jerusalem was destined to become the capital of the world and the Jews its imperial master; and that this kingdom of God would be brought by a Hebrew Christ sent into the world by God and endowed with supernatural powers.

When, therefore, a Jewish sect appeared with the preposterous claim that the Messiah had come, had been condemned to death as an impostor by the Jewish Supreme Court, the condemnation had been confirmed by the Roman Governor, and he had been put to the most painful and shameful death which the cruelty of the age had been able to devise, but had risen from the tomb, and that the kingdom of God under his leadership would presently appear, Paul was full of wrath. This to him was blasphemy, and should be promptly and unmercifully extirpated by the sword.—Lyman Abbott, in The Outlook.

The Danger of a Bad Conscience

In one of the letters of Timothy the Apostle Paul prays that his young friend may have "a good conscience"; and one might be led to ask: How can my conscience be bad? What can be better than conscientiousness? If one obeys his conscience, is he not sure to do right? On the contrary, answers the apostle, an undisciplined conscience with a moral decision to make may be as dangerous as an undisciplined soldier with a loaded gun. A conscience uninstructed may be as misleading as a conscience disobeyed. The will, like the mind, is not given ready-made, but given to be made ready. A bad conscience may be as dangerous as a bad man. History is strewn with the mistakes of conscientious people, who have been all the more persistent in their blundering because they were quite sure that they were doing right. Here is the pathos of many a sanguine adventure in social regeneration and of many a panacea for social ills. Such an undertaking may be prodigal in good intentions and conscientious in aim, so that its failure may leave behind it a sense of bewilderment that wrong can be so much stronger than right. Yet all the while the fatal defect was in bad perspective. One scheme or dream was set in the foreground of reform, and crowded out other motives and aims which were quite as legitimate and essential. And so it happens that temperance reform may be intemperate, and the brotherhood of labor may be unfraternal, and the crusade of women may be unwomanly, and the peace party may be belligerent, and religion itself may be bigoted or provincial or even cruel.—Francis Greenwood Peabody.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The life and death of Stephen bear certain marks of similarity to those of Jesus. See The Acts of the Apostles, by G. Campbell Morgan, pages 180-185.

2. Intellectual conviction that one is right; peace of conscience in what one is doing; but, at the same time, a dull, subconscious dread lest after all one is in the wrong—is it possible for a Christian to have all these? See Paul of Tarsus, by T. R. Glover, pages 59-61.

33. For a proud nature humility can be achieved—given co-operation between God and the soul. See The Character of Paul, by Charles E. Jefferson, Chapter X.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Compare the three major accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 9.1-22; 22.1-16; 26.9-20) and also I Corinthians 15.8, 9. 2. How had Paul's mind been prepared for this great event? 3. What is the force of the word, "but," in the first sentence of

Acts 9? Of "the Way," 9.2? 4. What prayer or prayers did Paul offer on the way to Damascus? 5. How completely did God answer him?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
IS CONSCIENCE A SAFE GUIDE?

Beginning the Lesson

The hero of our lesson today is Stephen, one of a famous group of seven men. First there were twelve leaders, you remember; but when, because of the growth of the early Christian Church, the work of preaching, teaching and also caring for the poor grew too much for the twelve, they chose seven others for the special service of what today we would perhaps call "Christian charity." Of these seven men, all "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom," Stephen was destined to become the most famous.

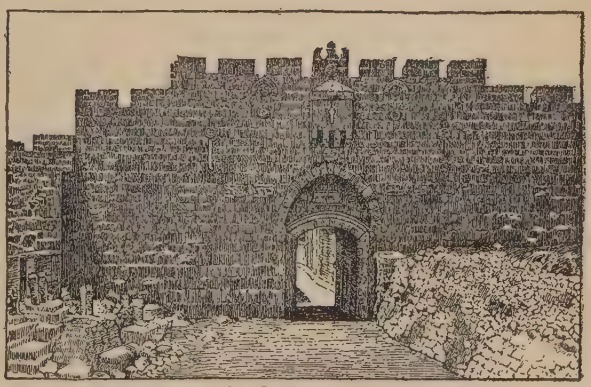
Now, if we call Stephen the hero of the lesson, it is natural for us to call Paul its villain. We are about to see in what his villainous act consisted, and why he did it, and also something of what the later effect of it proved to be on himself.

The Man with a Shining Face

Stephen was different from the other followers of Jesus. He saw farther than the rest did. He seems to have been the first of "those of the way" to realize that Jesus did not come to be the Messiah of the Jews alone and to purify their customs. Stephen thought he came to bring life and light and joy to all the world.

Stephen was so good and wise that he got a new idea of what the coming of Jesus meant. The truth was far bigger than the others dreamed, and he began to see it, and to tell about it. If God is Father, as Jesus kept saying he was, then he must love all men as well as Jews, and if God is Life and Spirit, then he can come into men's lives everywhere without any temple and without priests and sacrifices. Stephen began to wonder, as he thought about all that Jesus had said and taught and done, whether his message was not far greater and more wonderful even than the law of Moses, whether some day it would not take the place of the old system of laws and customs and sacrifices, and whether even the temple itself might no longer be needed to worship God in, for men might worship him anywhere they happened to be.

Stephen was bold and fearless, and he was so full of his great idea, that he tried to tell the people of the synagogue about it. They all turned upon him and called him a dangerous man. They thought that he was not true to the religion of his fathers, that he was teaching new ideas, that he was turning people away from the old customs, and that if the people followed his teaching they would overthrow the whole wonderful system of Moses, and so make it impossible for the Messiah to come, for whom all good Jews were waiting and longing.



East Gate, or "St. Stephen's Gate," Jerusalem

Then the Council in Jerusalem had Stephen arrested and brought before them for trial, and witnesses came in and told all the things they could think of to make the Council condemn him.

While they were talking against him they all saw a light shine on his face, and he looked more like an angel than like an ordinary man, and everybody wondered what he would say in answer to the charges that were made against him. Then quietly Stephen began to speak for himself. He did not try to prove that the things which had been said against him were false. He paid no attention to his own case. He told the Council that all through the history of their Hebrew race the people

had always failed to see new light when God brought it to them; they had always missed the path when God was trying to teach them new ideas. They cried out against Moses, he told them, in the wilderness. They worshiped a golden calf just at the time when he was giving them the law of God, and when the prophets came to teach them more about God, they served Moloch and other false gods instead of him. Their great, wise king Solomon had told them, when he built the temple, that no temple, however wonderful, could contain the great God who fills the universe, but the people did not understand his words and seemed to think that God lived only in their temple. "You have always failed to see the truth," Stephen cried. "You have always persecuted prophets when God has sent them to you. You have killed those who told about the coming of Jesus. And now you, yourselves, have betrayed and killed him when he did come. You talk about the law and you say that God gave it through angels. But you do not understand it and you do not really keep it."

That was more than they could stand. They forgot that they were judges and were having an orderly trial. They all rushed at Stephen. They showed their teeth at him and howled him down. But he was as calm and steady as though everything were peaceful. In the midst of the uproar, they suddenly heard him say: "I see Jesus! There he is, up there in the open sky, at the right of God in his glory." Then they all stopped their ears, so that they might not hear what he said, and they rushed at him and dragged him out of the city and stoned him. As the people who stoned him pulled off their garments so that they could throw the stones better, they gave their garments to Saul to hold. He did not join in throwing the stones, but he approved of what the others were doing, and he ran along with them and carried the garments. And he could see Stephen's wonderful face, which was shining more than ever now! He did not say one hard word against those who were killing him. But just at the end, Saul heard him say: "Lord Jesus, do not blame these people for what they are doing"—"Wilt thou now receive my spirit to thyself." And then, with the stones raining round him, the brave, good Stephen died—with the light still on his face.

Saul never forgot that face. He thought Stephen was wrong, and he believed that he must be stopped or he would bring harm to God's people. But he had never seen anybody die like that before! And the more he meditated and thought about it, the more he wondered at what Stephen had said, and still more over his dying words and his happy shining face!—Condensed from St. Paul the Hero, by Rufus M. Jones.

Laos Martyrs

In 1868 the first converts were baptized, at Chieng Mai, among the Laos people. Two of them were at once arrested, and confessed before the authorities that they had abandoned Buddhism. The death yoke was then put around their necks, and a small rope was passed through the holes in their ears (used for earrings by all natives), and carried tightly over the beam of the house. After thus being tortured all night they were again examined in the morning, but steadfastly refused to deny their Lord and Savior even in the face of death. They prepared for execution by praying to him, closing with the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Being then taken off to the jungle, they were clubbed to death by the executioner, and one of them, not dying quickly enough, was thrust through the heart with a spear. All of the seventy-three descendants of those martyrs are now members of the church.—Robert E. Speer, in Seeking the Mind of Christ.

The Duty of Educating the Conscience

In time (see next week's lesson) Paul learned to voice the publican's prayer, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," but at the time of the death of Stephen he was praying the petition of the Pharisee, "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as other men are." His conscience was upholding him in persecuting the Christians; but it was a conscience that was wholly wrong—wrong because unenlightened.

Thomas Jefferson once solemnly declared that "slavery was established by the decree of God." A century and a half ago colleges and churches were built in part from the proceeds of lotteries held to raise fund. Probably most people who earnestly try to lead a true Christian life at times awaken with a start to a realization that they have been blind to some duty which their conscience now tells them should have been done long ago.

Some one has said that the conscience is like a sun-dial; when the truth shines on it, it points in the right way, but it may be covered up so that no truth can fall on it, or false light may fall on it, and then it leads one astray. The owner of the conscience,

like the owner of the sun-dial, must see that it receives the true light. Paul's conscience was void of offense toward God when he persecuted the followers of Christ: "I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," he said. Paul meant well, but he had been sadly mistaken. When he found that false light had been falling on his conscience, he did not say that he would not trust it again, but he took the utmost pains to let the true light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ shine upon it, and then he trusted its guidance implicitly.

An automobile may go with equal speed in either direction, according as the wheel is turned, but alas for its occupants and for by-standers if it is turned in the wrong direction at a critical moment! We may think our words or actions are right, and yet they may be far wrong, and may result in untold harm to others.

It is not enough for one to do as well as he knows how; he ought to make sure that he is constantly learning better. "If I walk 'cordin' to the light I have, that's all that's 'spected of me, I s'pose," remarks a colored brother in a recent story, but his philosopher friend argues differently: "Don't be too sure on that subject. If we sit still in a dim place, when lights are outside, we're 'sponsible for not seein' well, I reckon."

Toward the end of his life Paul said to Felix, the governor of Judea, "I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always." He had exercised himself to have such a conscience, he had attained it by rigid self-discipline.

When the Needle Fails to Point True

One night off the Irish coast during the war a steamer was torpedoed. The boats were provisioned and dropped over the side, and in the captain's boat was placed a small machine gun for protection. The boat carried also the ship's compass, and the captain instructed the other craft to follow him as he laid his course toward land.

But late in the morning the captain began to suspect that the needle was not pointing north. For a little while he was puzzled; then he understood. The machine gun was affecting the needle. Only when they had reluctantly dropped the weapon overboard—for there was no room for it in the other boats—did they find a course that brought them to land.

How often in life something that we insist on taking unto ourselves solely for protection influences the delicate needle of conscience so that it no longer points true! For example, there is money. Most of us in laying out the course of our life feel sure that we must include it, for money is such a comforting protection against so many woes and ailments. Yet how many times under its subtle appeal the needle of conscience swings away from the ideal of strict honesty or truthfulness or generosity to which God intended it to point.

And there is the desire for popularity; it is a natural desire, but it carries with it the temptation to sacrifice principle, to surrender a high conviction, or a righteous ideal in order to get more of it. It is true that popular people have power of a certain kind, and on many occasions power is a great protection, but we must be sure not to pay too much for it. For the great end of life is not money or popularity or power; it is character. Whatever keeps us from attaining it would better be thrown overboard. Before the voyage is finished we shall thank God we have been wise enough to make the sacrifice.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

Whoso prevents not the commission of a wrong when he can do so, commands it to be done.—Seneca.

Conscience is like a watch—it may look right, and you may go by it on the assumption that it is right, and find that you have missed your train because it was all wrong, after all; the watch must be set by sure time, and regulated from time to time as comparison with the chronometer shows its need.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What were Paul's reasons for going to Damascus? 2. How far is Damascus from Jerusalem? 3. Tell in three words what happened to Paul before he completed that journey. 4. What do we mean by "being converted"? 5. Is true conversion always accompanied by a tremendous experience such as Paul's? 6. How does the human helper whom God used in his care of the converted Paul compare with another man of the same name? 7. For what purpose does our Golden Text say that Paul's newly found Lord came into the world? Who wrote these words? 8. If Paul had not become a follower of Christ, what books would our New Testament lack?

LESSON III—JULY 15

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

GOLDEN TEXT: Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1.15

LESSON Acts 9.1-19a; 22.6-16; 1 Corinthians 15.8

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.41-48

ACTS 22.6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, 13 came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and washed away thy sins, calling on his name.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SAUL THE ZEALOT, Acts 9.1, 2. The "But" indicates the contrast between Philip's zeal in advancing the gospel, which Luke has just recorded in Acts 8, and Saul's zeal in retarding it. By means of a vivid metaphor, Luke shows us how Saul's presence brought terror to the hearts of the disciples whom he hunted: "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest." "'Breathing hard, out of a threatening and murderous desire,' the Greek form there certainly warrants that translation." It is as if Saul were fairly panting, in his effort to give expression to his outraged thoughts concerning the disciples.

From the high priest Saul asked and readily obtained letters to the synagogue in Damascus, which permitted him to arrest believers of Christ, whether men or women, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. At Jerusalem the captives were to be brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. Henry Drummond puts the situation in a striking way: "In the pride of his Pharisee's heart Paul strikes out the idea to reverse the maxim of the Crucified Leader of the hated sect, and go into all the world and suppress the gospel in every creature."

There are similarities between the course of Paul and that of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the chief of the Red Terror in Russia. He was the organizer of the Soviet Inquisition, by which the Bolsheviks maintained their position against their enemies in the first years of their civil war for power. The Outlook said of him: "Incorruptible and implacable, he was the sort of inexorable judge who believed that people must be tortured and executed for the sake of an idea. He had the victims tortured to learn from them about plots against the Soviet state, to strike fear into the hearts of its foes, and so to advance the cause of Communism in Russia and—as undoubtedly he hoped—throughout the world. In certain aspects Communist fanaticism is like religious fanaticism. One of its most singular and significant products was this gentle individual and cruel inquisitor, Dzerzhinsky."

II. THE GRACE OF GOD, Acts 9.3-9; 22.6-11. As Saul, blindly zealous in God's cause, approached Damascus about noon, there suddenly shone from heaven a great light, which was brighter than the sun (Acts 26.13). And he heard a voice, saying in Hebrew (26.14): "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Bunyan speaks of his inward monitor as seemingly a voice from without: "Sometimes it would sound so loud within me, yea, and as it were call so strongly after me, that once, above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had, believe it me, called me, being at a great distance, methought he called so loud."

"They that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice

of him that spake to me," Paul says in the words of our text in which he recounted the event at Jerusalem, but Luke in his account of Acts 9.7 states that "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man."

"The accounts of this spiritual revolution, though differing in details, are, in their main outlines, not only singularly consistent with each other, but, when taken in connection with Paul's earlier career, become psychologically probable," a great religious teacher explains. "A young student, scrupulously trained in reverence for the Law, is suddenly confronted by the evidence of amazing serenity and sacrifice in a Christian 'witness.' Thinking of this, as he goes his way along the Damascus road, he is overwhelmed by the conviction that his zeal has been terribly and humiliatingly mistaken, and that, while he had once believed it his duty actively to oppose the name of Jesus the Nazarene, he had been blind to a higher vision and unheeding to an inward voice. Like many a later convert untutored like Joan of Arc or the peasant girl of Lourdes, royal like Constantine, scholastic like Augustine, worldly like Ignatius Loyola—the sudden and unanticipated vision of Jesus convinces him of his sin and in an instant transforms his life."

"And I answered, 'Who art thou, Lord?'" thus Paul tells the story. How do we answer that question? Jesus became to Paul "a life-giving Spirit, who made him a new man, fearlessly confident in God and with a passion to make the whole world Christ's."

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," came the answer to Paul. In persecuting the followers of Jesus, Paul had been persecuting Jesus himself, Mt. 25.40.

He who needlessly hurts another human soul, hurts three—the other one, himself and God.

[In the Authorized Version there is added here, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Because a copyist is believed to have inserted this sentence here in the Vulgate—whence it was translated in the A. V.—from Acts 26.14, the Revised Version omits it. "Against the pricks," or "the goad," suggests that Saul had long been fighting against an inner conviction that the Christ whom Stephen had preached was indeed the Son of God.]

Paul's first prayer of petition to his new-found Master was, "What shall I do, Lord?" As Dr. J. W. Dawson notes, Paul did not dispute, evade, nor rationalize the vision. "It is extremely unlikely that any form of argument would have convinced Paul," Dr. Dawson thinks; "but there was that in him which made him sensitive to the vision and the words of the Damascus road. No man was ever more deeply penetrated with the sense of an invisible world. He was a believer in the supernatural, and a man with a poet's heart, whose senses were tuned to the rhythm of the infinite. A man of the world, bent on material gain, would have disputed the heavenliest vision, even though it had been unfolded by archangels and announced with all the trumpets of the sky."

The response to his question was direct, but simple: "Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee." In his sudden and intense experience of Christ's reality and presence, Saul was in no condition to receive and understand a complete statement of his full duty.

Christ told Saul all that he needed just then to know; the full revelation was to follow his ready obedience to what his Master now revealed to him. It is so today; always we can receive from God exactly enough light on our duty to enable us to take the next step.

When Saul arose from the ground, he was blind, and like a small child he was led by the hand into Damascus. "He who had come armed with official authority to end the Nazarene heresy, was led in, the blind slave of the Christ." What a contrast to the Saul setting out from Jerusalem a few days before! In the city he remained three days, without seeing and without eating.

Never afterwards was Paul himself in doubt as to the reality of Christ's appearing to him. He tells us in First Corinthians 9.1 that in the light he saw Jesus himself, in his risen, glorified body. To him the risen Christ came, he believed, as he came to the eleven apostles during the forty days after the Resurrection: this was the ground on which he claimed equal authority with the other apostles: 1 Cor. 15.8; 2 Cor. 11.5; Gal. 2.8; Acts 22.21.

What sort of vision was it? David Smith says that Paul's experience was no mere subjected phantom, but an actual vision. Another says it was real and objective to

the extent that all spiritual experiences are objective. "The question has no existence for faith. Faith knows that what happened, happened in any case because God chose to work it thus—whether Paul really beheld Jesus in the light, or whether it was merely a visionary sight." In any event, it was the good pleasure of God, as Paul himself said, to reveal his Son in Paul.

"In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is his own best evidence,
His witness is within" (Whittier).

III. THE HUMAN AGENT OF GOD, Acts 9.10-19; 22.12-16. "One Ananias" (of course, not the Ananias of Acts 5), unknown to us except for the fact that he was a devout man of good reputation among the Jews, in a vision was told to go "to the street which is called straight," and at the house of a man named Judas to inquire for Saul, a man of Tarsus.

Naturally, Ananias hesitated to carry out the commission. He said: "Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name." But the Lord said unto him, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." All this the account in Acts 9 tells us. Ananias obeyed, persuaded partly by the astounding information regarding the fanatical and dreaded Pharisee, "Behold, he prayeth." Saul as a Pharisee had long been accustomed to pray, but there was a difference now in his praying—he was calling on the name of Jesus (Acts 9.14).

"Tremendous issues are always suspended on our judgments of our fellow-men. Until we learn to judge men on the basis of what they are and may become we shall be continually doing them an injustice and depriving mankind of noble service.

"Will you apply that to our usual treatment of men who have served terms in prison? Many a man has been helped to return to an evil career because he is judged by his past without regard to his present state and future possibilities. How would we like to have God judge us solely on our past conduct?" (Henry van Dyke).

Ananias entered the house of Judas and laid his hands upon the blinded Saul. "Brother Saul," he said (by using this term he affectionately welcomed him into the brotherhood of followers of Christ), "receive thy sight." At once Saul's sight was restored to him.

"The surgeon may make careful preparations, but how deft and swift is the critical work when the cataract has at last to be removed from the eye! The miracle of spiritual sight-giving is swifter still. The flash of a thought—who can measure the duration of it? All that we know is that God can do his most amazing work on human souls with a rapidity that even to think of, dazzles us" (Charles S. Horne).

Now the new Christian could see clearly—both physically and spiritually; for there had fallen "from his eyes as it were scales." (The Greek word here for "scales," a technical medical term, is one of the many proofs that Acts was written by Luke, a physician.) In his new-found light, Saul received baptism as a follower of the Lord Jesus. But before this important step was taken he received an intimation of what his future work was to be. "The God of our fathers," announced Ananias, employing a phrase comfortably familiar to Saul the Jew, "hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One" (that Righteous One, the glorified Jesus, of whom Saul on a bitterly tragic day had heard the martyr Stephen tell, Acts 7.52). "For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." The transformation seems to be complete; Saul the blindly zealous Pharisee is now Paul the Christian and Paul the missionary to the Gentiles.

"Notice that it is possible for simple and obscure persons," even such a one as Ananias of Damascus or as Anyman of America, "to bring into the light, souls who will exert a living power which they themselves could never exert. A tiny taper may light a beacon."

In Paul's account of the event given in Acts 26, he concludes with the statement: "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He was, as Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown terms him, "the man who made good."

"We have been looking at ourselves, what our capacities are. We have been looking at the world round about, and asking where in this scheme of things can we fit most usefully. What is the greatest need that we can meet today? That is what the vision meant to Paul. It gave him not only a mission, but adequacy for its accomplishment. All through life Paul felt that someone else was with him: 'Not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' Will you not take these two things with you, a sense of something definite that the Lord Jesus Christ wants of you, and a consciousness of abiding power so that you can say, not immodestly, but as Paul said it, 'I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me'" (Henry Sloane Coffin).

IV. THE VISION OF GLORY, First Corinthians 15.8. See now how all this appeared, long afterward, to Paul. In all humility, yet in abounding confidence and Christian pride, he cited, as one of the evidences of the resurrection of Christ, the Lord's personal appearance to him. The risen Christ appeared, he wrote, "to me also" yet "as to the child untimely born." Paul felt that he had come into the apostolic circle as one prematurely born comes into the world. The Twelve had slowly but normally developed in Christian knowledge. He had been suddenly translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. His past had a record he longed to forget but found facing him again and again as he met those who had cruelly suffered at his hands in the old days of persecution—and his first revelation was of the risen Lord who reigns in glory!" (William Bancroft Hill).

And the God who dealt so tenderly, so understandingly and so empoweringly with Saul, is the same God whom we worship today. With him there is for us also forgiveness, and a revelation of glory which can make of a life of service, a life of daily joy.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Went unto the high priest, 9.1, 2. An imperial edict of Julius Cæsar, in 47 B. C., decreed that "Hyrcanus and his children do retain all the rights of high priest, whether established by law or accorded by courtesy; if hereafter any question arises touching the Jewish polity I desire that the determination thereof be referred to him." Augustus confirmed this decree, and in the trial of Jesus we saw how the Romans allowed the high priest with the rest of the Sanhedrin the jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases (though not the power of carrying out a death penalty). This jurisdiction extended to Jews living in any part of Palestine and even beyond.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What is the first mention of Paul in The Acts? By what series of acts did he follow up that tragic event? Was he sincere in this work?

The Turning Point in Paul's Career

Paul aimed to wipe out the new sect of "The Way" completely. Imprisoning some of its members in Jerusalem, and driving others from the city, was not enough; he must hunt them down where they had fled. Because many of them were at Damascus, to Damascus he went. On his way, he met the Lord.

Paul could have taken several routes from Jerusalem, but doubtless he took that one which was the quickest and most traveled. This ran directly north to Shechem, then, inclining eastward around the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, led directly to Damascus—about 130 miles from Jerusalem in a straight line, and five to eight days' journey on horseback.

Damascus was the chief city of Syria and reputed to be the oldest city in the world. The Bible mentions it first in Abraham's time. It is watered by rivers famous in the Bible—the Barada (Abana) and Awaj (Pharpar), which Naaman thought better than all the waters of Israel. These rivers have made a rich plain in the midst of the surrounding desert celebrated for its gardens and orchards and fountains. Even to-day the natives of that region call Damascus the "Silver Spoon," because of its appearance of luxurious vegetation, as well as on account of its shape.

"Straight Street" runs east and west through the entire city, and is sometimes called "the Backbone of Damascus." In Paul's time it was a hundred feet wide and was divided by high Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, the central one for foot passengers, the others for chariots and horses. It is still the most important thoroughfare of the city, but it makes several turns and is in part roofed over with glass and lined with shops, seemingly an endless arcade.

Tradition long located the scene of Paul's conversion six miles southwest of the city, but now a site more convenient for visitors is shown not far from a house on the city wall credited with being the one from which Paul escaped in a basket (next lesson). Over the gateway of a house within the walls there is the inscription, San Ananiæ Domus, House of Saint Ananias, and within its courtyard a subterranean grotto, used by the Franciscans as a chapel, has pictures representing Paul's vision and baptism.

So-called House of Ananias

Damascus was the first Christian city captured by Mohammedanism. Except for a brief period, it was under Turkish domination for 400 years, until it was taken by the Western Allies during the World War.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Whether to children or to adults, this lesson, if carefully presented, can be made peculiarly interesting. For here are: Adventure, tragedy, suffering, joy (children); and also: Intense determination, an inflexible will, a disturbing conscience, physical and spiritual tragedy, sudden illumination, forgiven sins, the joy of a new life (adults).

Would you see how from the earliest years religion may be a normal and natural part of one's life, read Finding the Trail of Life, by Rufus M. Jones.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CONVERSION OF A PHARISEE

Beginning the Lesson

When an experience in the life of one man makes, at the same time, an overwhelming impression on him, an ineffaceable impression on a famous historian, and a permanent impression on the world from his day onward—that event is worth interested and careful study. Such an event was the conversion of Saul the Pharisee, who became Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.

That epochal event so deeply impressed Paul himself that in the fragmentary account of his life which we have in The Acts, we find two long descriptions of it in his own words (chapters 22 and 26); and, in those letters of his which still survive, we have two explicit and sustained references to his having been transformed from a persecutor into an ardent worshiper of Jesus (Gal. 1.12-23, 1 Tim. 1.12-15), besides many shorter or more indirect references to it. Moreover, Luke, in writing the history of the early Christian Church, gives a clear and thrilling recital of the same event (Acts 9). Paul became the church's first and greatest foreign missionary, its first and greatest theologian, and a Christian leader whose influence for Christ has been unparalleled in all the succeeding centuries.

Of the Bible's five explicit accounts of Paul's conversion we are now to study two (Acts 9 and 22), and also one of his own briefer references to it (1 Cor. 15.8). (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

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THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT, DAMASCUS

What Paul Learned about God

It was a new perception of God that had come to Paul. The God of Pharisaism stood aloof from the world he had made, and let law take its course. He did not here and now deal with individual, sinful men. Paul lets us see how new and wonderful was the experience, when God "flashed on his heart" in personal dealing with him. He had not suspected that God was like that. His theological studies had told him that God was loving and merciful; but he had thought this love and mercy were expressed once and for all in the arrangements he had made for Israel's blessedness—"the plan of salvation." It was a new thing to be assured by an inward experience admitting of no further question that God loved him, and that the eternal mercy was a Father's free forgiveness of his erring child. This was the experience that Christ had brought him: he had seen the splendor of God's own love in the face of the son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him," Gal. 2.19, 20.

What knowledge of Jesus Christ and his teaching lay behind the flash of enlightenment it is now impossible for us to say; but it is clear that the God whom Paul met was the "Shepherd" who goes after the one sheep until he finds it. Henceforward the central facts of life for Paul were that while he was yet a sinner God had found and forgiven him, and that this was the work of Jesus Christ in whose love the love of God had become plain. About these two foci in experience his theology revolves.—C. Harold Dodd, in The Meaning of Paul for Today.

Why Did Paul's Experience on the Way to Damascus Mean a New Vocation?

Why did the vision of Jehovah enthroned, high and lifted up, while his glory filled the temple, mean first a new sense of sin to Isaiah, and then a call to go on behalf of God where God should send him? Why was Jeremiah irresistibly a prophet? Why had Amos to leave his flock in the South? Why must Buddha share his illumination? Why can a man see Truth and not be able to leave it alone? In religion, to see is to speak. There is no alternative. All that had been pent up in Paul, all the instincts crushed by his resolve to be a thoroughgoing Pharisee, everything—love of men, Gentile memories, the craving for the largest-hearted God possible—was released at once and joyful. John Bunyan says that he himself under somewhat similar circumstances felt as if he could talk about the love of God to the cross by the roadside, and legend (or perhaps history) says that Francis of Assisi did. Paul and Bunyan had other game.—T. R. Glover, in Paul of Tarsus.

The Pharisee's Question Which All Should Ask

Some years ago I happened to be in Southern California in the valley back of Los Angeles. Some one spoke about a stream up in the mountains. It seemed to me a most inconsiderable brook to be called a stream. They could take the whole of that brook and put it into a wooden trough about twenty or twenty-four inches broad and certainly not more than eighteen inches deep. The whole of that stream could be captured and carried along in that trough, and I said something disparaging about it as a stream.

My friend said: "Well, come away down and let me show you something!"

So we walked quite a distance to a place where this stream was carried in this trough over a drop in a round, wooden tunnel, a drop of four or five hundred feet sheer, and fell upon the turbines of a great engine, and supplied the light and power for a not inconsiderable city. A small stream that you could speak of disparagingly, but when concentrated, furnishing light and power for a large community!

If you will take that single question and ask it honestly, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" he will take and concentrate you and you will become a source of light and power in your generation.—Henry Sloane Coffin, in an Address.

How Shall You Invest Your Life?

The investment of a life is of such far-reaching import to the young people involved that some fundamental and safe principles for deciding this question of one's life work should be clearly stated and carefully studied. One way of stating these principles would be as follows:

1. Enter that calling that will provide growing satisfaction and ample scope for your fully developed powers.

2. Enter that calling that will provide opportunity for the largest possible unselfish endeavor and will most contribute to the welfare of mankind.

3. Enter that calling that is most in harmony with the will of God for the world and for your life.—Joseph C. Robbins.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Intellectual changes in Paul resulting from his conversion. See five changes, pages 68-70, in Paul of Tarsus, by T. R. Glover.

2. The sincerity of the converted Paul. See Chapter V, The Character of Paul, by Charles E. Jefferson.

4. The folly of opposing God. See chapter on The Challenge of Attempted Suppression, in Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did Paul go to Arabia? 2. How fully could he have foreseen the treatment which he received from the Jews at Damascus and Jerusalem? 3. Were the disciples at Jerusalem justified in their treatment of him? 4. Why is Antioch called "the second birthplace of Christianity"? 5. Describe the Antioch of that time. 6. Which one of our large denominations is called by a name originally given in ridicule? 7. What did Barnabas think of the converted Paul? 8. What do you think of Barnabas? 9. What were the new Paul's dominant characteristics? 10. What had his personal knowledge of Christ added to his qualifications for Christian service? 11. What are your qualifications for Christian service?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW SAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN

Beginning the Lesson

In one of the most beautiful cities of the world, which was also one of the world's oldest, a group of men, women and children were talking together in excitement, almost in fear. "But what ever shall we do?" asked one. "What indeed *can* we do, if he follows us even to this distant place?"

"Yes, must we flee yet again," asked a second, "in order to escape from him?"

"Flee! Flee where?" demanded another. "Can we carry with us into the desert our children? Or would you have us climb those forbidding mountains on the other side?"

"But surely, surely," ventured still another, "he will not seek us out, in this far city of Damascus—are we not safe here?"

An old man among the troubled people sighed heavily. "No," said he, "even here we are not safe from him. Even here Saul the Persecutor can search us out, and hale us to prison or to death."

Then a younger speaker interposed: "But hearken, brothers!" he urged them. "Are we not in the keeping of the Lord? Let us pray." And the followers of Jesus in the city of Damascus committed their distresses to Jesus, their Master and their God.

Meanwhile, in the far-away Jerusalem the high priest had been writing letters to the Jews who were in authority in Damascus. The letters instructed them to aid the bearer, one Saul of Tarsus, a zealous man among the Pharisees, in seizing and binding all persons who claimed faith in one Jesus of Nazareth. These followers of the Nazarene Jesus were to be brought back to Jerusalem, there to be punished for their heresy. Bearing these dreadful letters, and taking with him a few of the temple police, Saul the Persecutor passed out of the gate of Jerusalem and made his way toward Damascus, the while "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." (Adapted from Paul the Ambassador, by Grace Winter.)

How Saul Became a Christian

See Explanations and Comments.

How Wendell Phillips Became a Christian

When I was a boy of fourteen years of age, in the old church at the North End, I heard Lyman Beecher preach on the theme, "You belong to God." I went home after that service, threw myself on the floor in my room, with locked doors, and prayed: "O God, I belong to thee. Take what is thine own. I ask this, that whenever a thing is wrong, it may have no power of temptation over me, and that whenever a thing is right, it may take no courage to do it."

How John Wanamaker Began the Christian Life

To Mr. Charles M. Alexander Mr. Wanamaker told this story of his conversion:

I was a country boy who had come to the city. A salesman asked me if I wouldn't go to his church. I was at a prayer meeting there one night, where

there were perhaps two hundred persons. It was a quiet, old-fashioned meeting. There was a handsome old man of about seventy, who got up and in the gravest way said that he was just waiting for God to take him; that he had lived his life; that God had been good to him; and it was all summed up in the statement that religion was a good thing to die by. I sat way back, and I always had a great fashion of talking to myself. I said: "Well, old man, you can't touch me; you have lived your life; you haven't any sympathy with a big boy; it has passed over my head."

Soon after a young fellow got up. He was perhaps thirty-five, and he said: "You have heard an old man tell you that religion was good to die by; I want to tell you it's good to live by. I have just begun the Christian life. Two years ago I was converted. I had just begun business, and I had had a prejudice against religion; they told me that a man had to have a face a yard long and couldn't smile or do anything that would make him happy. You see I was deceived about that; I am a great deal happier since I became a Christian, because it settled things. I am a better business man; a great load has rolled off my heart and I can give myself more to my work."

I listened to him and I said to myself: "There you are; you want to be a business man, and he tells you how you can be a better business man. He tells you that religion is good to live by. Another man tells you that religion is good to die by." I said, "Suppose you were in a court and heard two statements like that, would you believe them?" "Yes," I replied to myself. "Well," I said, "do you intend ever to be a Christian?" "Yes." "Well, if it's a good thing, why don't you be it right away?" I said, "Yes, I will."

I waited in the meeting until everybody went out except the janitor and the old minister, and as he came down the aisle he met a country boy coming up, and I was the chap. I simply said to him, "I have settled it tonight to give my heart to God." And he reached out his hand and said, "God bless you, my son; you will never regret it." That was the whole business. I didn't wait to get some feeling. I accepted the fact that I was a sinner, and that there was a Savior for sinners, and I came to him simply on the proposition that the gift of God is eternal life.

How a Japanese Youth Became a Christian

One day a young Japanese found a leaf from the Bible. He asked some one if he knew where God was about whom this printed sheet spoke. The man directed him to a ship at the dock where, he said, there was an American who could tell him. The young man sought out the captain with his question, and the captain sent him to the owner of the ship who was on board. The latter said that he could not tell him much about God, but if he would ship with him as a sailor he would take him to the United States and place him in the care of a man who believed in God and would tell him what he wanted to know. The young man went with the owner to Boston, and was placed by his new-found friend in an educational institute. There his long search was rewarded; he found God. Now he is one of the most distinguished teachers in Japan.

Sentence Sermons

The appeal of conscience is not less the voice of God than the expostulation at the gates of Damascus.—W. L. Watkinson.

The number of the ways to God is the number of the souls of men.—Harold Bugbie.

The value of conversion depends not on the process, but on the fruits.—William James.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where does Gal. 1.15-18 tell us that Paul went? 2. What do you think he did in Arabia? 3. Why did the Jews at Damascus turn against Paul? 4. Why did he then go to Jerusalem? 5. Why was it natural for the disciples at Jerusalem to be suspicious of Paul? 6. Why did Paul go to Tarsus? 7. Where was Antioch? 8. Why did Barnabas choose Paul as his helper at Antioch? 9. What does the new name given there to the disciples mean? 10. What have the disciples been called before this time? 11. Do you honor the name of Christian?

LESSON IV—JULY 22

SAUL'S EARLY MINISTRY

GOLDEN TEXT: Straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. Acts 9.20

LESSON Acts 9.19b-30; 11.19-30; 12.25; Galatians 1.15-18

DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 12.1-8

ACTS 9.19 And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. 20 And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. 21 And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23 And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: 24 but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: 25 but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, 29 preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him. 30 And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

ACTS 11.25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL'S PREPARATION IN ARABIA FOR HIS MINISTRY, Galatians 1.15-18. Luke says nothing about Paul's stay in Arabia, but Paul writes in his Epistle to the Galatians: "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem." "It was a voluntary novitiate, a period of reflection and restraint, during which the truth which he had been so abruptly called to preach might be assimilated and clarified." Paul may have gone as far as Mount Sinai, yet it is possible that he went no farther than the desert region near Damascus, which might somewhat loosely have been known as Arabia. Like Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry, before entering upon his work Paul went into the wilderness to fight his inner battles and think his problems through.

"'The soul,' said Robertson, 'collects its mightiest power by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the moral and mental character marvelously.' It was into the solitude of Arabia that Paul passed after the dazing revolution on the Damascus road, and there in the stillness the great solidifying of new character was made, and the new establishing of his life in God" (Robert E. Speer).

II. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT DAMASCUS, Acts 9.19-25. After his conversion Paul remained "certain days" with the disciples at Damascus, Luke tells us. Probably it was during the period of time thus indefinitely referred to, that he visited Arabia. Returning to Damascus, Paul boldly and powerfully "proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God." That is, he announced the true and rightful standing of Jesus "as a herald proclaims the name of a sovereign."

An echo of these words was heard in London a few years ago when a convention of Christian young people from many nations had read to them a cable message from Japanese Christians: "Make Jesus King!" The words electrified the convention, and sent the delegates home with a new conception of what it means to live and speak and work for Christ. Genuine Christian living is, in fact, proclaiming the kingship of Jesus.

In spite of the amazement of the Jews over this strange conduct of a Pharisee who had come to Damascus for the avowed purpose of arresting the believers in Jesus, Paul grew steadily in Christian experience and in ability to preach, and was constantly "proving that this is the Christ." The Greek word for "proving" suggests that Paul, for the aid of his Jewish hearers, compared Messianic passages of the Old Testament with events in the life of Jesus, and from the comparison drew convincing proof that Jesus was the Jews' expected Messiah. In the old days he had mistakingly thought he ought to do all he could *against* Jesus of Nazareth; now he knew that a lifetime of service *for* him would be a gift all too small.

The defeated Jews, when for many days Paul had been "confounding" them with his arguments, plotted to kill him. Learning that they were keeping watch day and night over the gates of the city, to prevent his leaving the place alive, the disciples one night lowered him in a basket over the city wall. They let the basket down from the window of a house built against, or on the top of, the wall. Somewhat similarly, the Hebrew spies had escaped from Jericho, Joshua 2.15. Strange, that an incident so well known to the Jews could be duplicated among them, and at a time when they were so watchful!

III. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT JERUSALEM AND TARSUS, Acts 9.26-30. Paul returned to Jerusalem, but he came back, not "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples," but breathing Christian fellowship and good will for them. That they doubted his sincerity, however, is not hard to understand; "they were afraid of him." They could not believe that he was a sincere follower of Christ.

A time of new humility for Paul this must have been. He was eager to serve Christ among his old acquaintances, but found himself hindered by his own forgiven but unchristian past. Experiences like his often come to other young Christians—who yet, like Paul, can remain faithful, and win out in the end.

"It does not require any great exercise of the imagination to realize that the primitive church by its suspiciousness and by its coldness ran a great risk that day of losing Paul. In these days of ours coolness and aloofness have chilled the ardor of many a young disciple. There are people outside the church altogether, just because they have not been kindly received by the people inside the church" (J. D. Jones).

But Barnabas, that good man (Acts 11.24) intervened. He was the kind of man that devotes his life to those in trouble. He took Paul by the hand, presented him to the apostles, and guaranteed the reality of his conversion and the worth of his work at Damascus. Barnabas succeeded in setting the fears of the disciples at rest, and they admitted Paul to intimate and full Christian fellowship.

"'But Barnabas'—the world always needs some individuals who will thus dare misjudgment at the hands of their fellow-workers, challenge opposition, scatter doubts, champion the weak, encourage the new converts, and take a strong, timely part in the process of making Sauls into Pauls. Perhaps there is somebody in our neighborhood, misjudged and disparaged, to whom we may act the part of a Barnabas. If we have the spirit of a Barnabas, we shall find that our Lord and we have more friends in the world, even in Jerusalem, than we imagined" (Zion's Herald).

As at Damascus, Paul preached boldly at Jerusalem. "Paul had believed that if he were to go to Jerusalem and speak as a Pharisee to the Pharisees, and open to them the Old Testament, and tell them what he had discovered of the Kingdom of God, they would be as glad to accept the glad tidings as he was. He argued this matter, he tells us (Acts 22.17-21) with the Lord. He said to the Lord: 'Why, I persecuted the Christians; I am a Pharisee; they will understand me; let me begin my work at Jerusalem.' And the Lord answered him by letting him try the experiment—a way the Lord has of answering us, when we want to have our own way instead of doing his" (Lyman Abbott).

After scarcely two weeks in the city (Gal. 1.18) Paul had to flee for his life from Jerusalem, as he had fled from Damascus. The Grecian Jews, unable to meet forceful arguments, sought to kill him. His new brothers in Christ helped him to escape. They went with him to Cæsarea, the seaport of Jerusalem, and from there he went to Tarsus, his old home town.

"Paul returned to the city of his birth. One's home is always the first and best place for Christian testimony."

Of those years in Tarsus we know nothing. They have been called "Paul's silent years," just as we speak of the eighteen years of Jesus' life in Nazareth as "the silent years," because all we know about him in those years is that he grew in wisdom and grace, in favor with God and with man.

IV. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT ANTIOCH, Acts 11.25, 26. Ten years or more pass by before we again hear of Paul. During the long period of his humble service in Cilicia stirring events had been occurring in the large city of Antioch in northern Syria, a city which was virtually the capital of all the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Some of the Christian disciples who had fled from Jerusalem after the death of Stephen had gone to Antioch, and there had told their Gentile neighbors of the Lord Jesus. In time a flourishing church had developed among the Antiochan Gentiles.

The Church at Jerusalem was alarmed over this new departure of preaching to Gentiles, and Barnabas was sent to Antioch to investigate the situation. It is a mark of a good man to rejoice in good work, whether done in the customary way or not. Barnabas was glad when he saw the genuineness of the conversion of the Gentiles. "We are scarcely just to these early Jewish Christians when we wonder at their hesitation on this matter and forget the enormous strength of the prejudices and sacred conviction which they had to overcome. Hence the context seems to consider that the quick recognition of their Christian character on the part of Barnabas, and his gladness at the discovery need explanation, and so it adds with special reference to these, as it would seem, "for he was a good man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," as if nothing short of such characteristics could have sufficiently emancipated him from the narrowness that would have refused to discern the good" (Alexander Maclaren).

"There was more in Barnabas than hospitality to new men; there was also a hospitality to new ideas, and that we all need, especially as we grow older. We need to remember that God's Spirit is always at work—often in quite new ways from the past. If the Church is to thrive, it must seek to adapt itself to the ever varying condition of things. Therefore, like Barnabas, let us ever give the right hand of fellowship to the new man, the new movement, or the new method, if it is plainly blessed of God."

Barnabas stayed at Antioch and strengthened this growing community of disciples. Eventually its prosperity became so pronounced ("much people was added unto the Lord," Acts 11.24) that Barnabas felt the need of help. The need was urgent. "When the Gospel entered Antioch, it entered the full current of life in the Roman Empire." The door of opportunity was opening to the whole Gentile world. Barnabas knew just the man for the work, who had the necessary breadth of mind and sympathy of heart, a Jew like himself who was familiar with Greek language, culture and thought. Accordingly, Barnabas went to Tarsus and brought Paul back with him to Antioch. Thus it came to pass that the man who had driven from Jerusalem the disciples who had founded the church at Antioch, now came to help them in their work there.

Barnabas' invitation to Paul was "an act of unselfishness and discernment. Barnabas must have realized that if he were associated with such a master mind as Paul, he himself would soon sink into a place of secondary importance. But his supreme concern was the success of the cause of Christ. The Lord had given to Paul preparation for a world-wide witness, and he used the generous invitation of Barnabas as the means of starting upon his course the greatest missionary of all the ages. Next, if second, to accomplishing a notable task for Christ and his church, is the privilege of being allowed to play the part of a Barnabas, and to introduce a great worker to his task" (Charles R. Erdman).

Together Barnabas and Paul directed the work of the thriving church at Antioch for an entire year.

V. THE NEW NAME OF THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, Acts 11.26b. The disciples were called Christians—Christ's men—first in Antioch. Until this time they had been only a sort of Jewish sect, for practically all were Jews or else Jewish

proselytes, converts. They called themselves learners, disciples, saints, the faithful, believers, brethren, sons of one Father, those of "the Way." But now a name was needed that would include both Jews and Gentiles. The need was met through the bestowing, apparently by the people of Antioch in ridicule, of the new term "Christians."

Civis Romanus sum—I am a Roman citizen—was the proud claim which at this time procured special rights and favors in all lands. *Christianos sum*—I am a Christian—became later the equally proud claim which led to grievous tortures and even death. The word *Christian* had become a sacred name by the time of Julian's reign in the middle of the fourth century.

"I think also that Antioch named these people by what Antioch saw in them. They were the people of the Christ," says G. Campbell Morgan. "It was of the Christ they spoke, of the Christ they sang, for the Christ they lived." Humanity is quick to catch the meaning of one's daily interests, daily conversation, and daily purposes—and to "label" one accordingly. To know that one's acquaintances can say, "That man is a real Christian," is worth many a day of self-discipline, many a moment of self-control.

VI. THE LIBERALITY OF THE CHRISTIANS OF ANTIOCH, Acts 11.27-30. When, after a time, a widespread famine broke out in various parts of the Roman Empire, the Christians at Antioch contributed money to relieve the needs of their suffering brethren in and near Jerusalem. Their gift they sent in the care of Barnabas and Paul. On their return to Antioch, the two were accompanied by a young man named John Mark, of whom we are later to hear more.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The disciples were called Christians, 11.26. It has been thought that *Christian* was a nickname given by the people of Antioch in derision, in the same spirit as since then have been given the now honored names of *Protestant, Puritan, Wesleyan, Methodist.* The Greek word for *Christ* is *Christos,* and it is very similar to another Greek word, *Chrestos,* which was sometimes used ironically for "a good fellow." The people of Antioch were noted for their witty epigrams, and in their term of *Christianoi* there may have been a play upon words. On the other hand, it may have been only natural that they called the followers of Christ, Christ's men, just as they called the followers of Pompey, Pompey's men, or *Pompeiani.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Who was Stephen, and what did Paul have to do with him? What had Paul been doing in Jerusalem before he went to Damascus? When he started for Damascus, what did he purpose doing there? Why did he not do it? Who aided Paul at Damascus? When were all in a synagogue amazed at Jesus, and what question did they ask in regard to his former life?

The Background of Acts 9.19-30

This text follows immediately that of last week's lesson.

The Background of Acts 11.23, 26

See IV, Explanations and Comments.

It was a tremendous innovation, this preaching to Gentiles at Antioch. Because of its influence on later events, Antioch has been called the second birthplace of Christianity.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Antioch, the city where Christianity was first preached to Gentiles in large numbers, and where the disciples were first called Christians, became "the mother church" of the Gentile Christians, as Jerusalem was the "mother church" of the Jewish Christians. It was the birthplace of Christian missions, for it was the starting point from which Paul set out on his three great missionary journeys.

Antioch was on the Orontes in northern Syria, sixteen miles from the coast, where it had a seaport called Selucia. It was the capital of the province of Syria, and one of the most famous cities of the ancient world. With a population of half a million, it ranked as the third largest and wealthiest city of the Roman Empire, Rome being the first and Alexandria the second. The main street which, like the

Street called Straight of Damascus, ran for five miles directly through the city, was paved with blocks of white marble and lined with double colonnades of marble. "Trees, flowers and fountains adorned the promenade, and poets sang of the beauty of the statue of Apollo and of the Nymphæum erected near the river."

The majority of the population were Syrians, but they spoke the Greek language. As it was the seat of the Roman Governor, there were large numbers of Romans in the city, and the Jews, who had been given equal rights of citizenship with the Macedonians and Greeks on the founding of the city about 300 B. C., formed a considerable community.

To Antioch came the richly laden caravans from Persia and India. Read the account in Ben Hur. It was a city of great luxury and equally great wickedness. So notorious was it for its shameless corruption that Juvenal, the satirist, characterized the degradation of Rome by saying that "the Syrian Orontes has flowed into the Tiber." "Such a city was a field white for the harvest," observes a writer, "gasping like a thirsty land for a renovating and life-giving gospel, and the large fringe of Gentile adherents which hung around the synagogues offered the Christian evangelist a golden opportunity."

Allegorical Statue of Antioch
The city is represented as a crowned queen, seated on a rock. The figure at her feet represents the Orontes.

In the later history of the Church, Antioch became famous for its school of theology. Ignatius the martyr was bishop here, and Chrysostom, who was later Archbishop of Constantinope (died in 407), was a native of Antioch. In the third and fourth centuries ten Church Councils were held here.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

As you study this lesson, does it occur to you to wonder why Paul had to spend ten years at his old home in Tarsus before he began his work for Christ? Why the long delay?

Preparation—this is the logical answer. It was a great work that Paul was to do; he must be completely prepared for it. That sudden rending of the veil between his soul and the Spirit of Christ which had marked his conversion at the Damascus gate—that was not enough. His retirement to Arabia for meditation (study) was not enough. His public acceptance by Christ's disciples at Damascus and Jerusalem was not enough. His sufferings for Christ's sake in each city were not enough. Though he was to serve Christ as his missionary among the Gentiles for a period covering not more than about twenty years altogether, he needed ten years of intensive preparation for that service.

Is it not true of all life, that any great success must be preceded by great preparing? Is it not true, for example, of the successful teaching of a Church School class?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

YEARS OF GROWING EXPERIENCE

Beginning the Lesson

"When once you have said a thing, that fixes it—and you must take the consequences," it is remarked in Alice Through the Looking Glass. Paul, the persecutor converted on the road to Damascus, learned the truth of this saying. In a real sense, Paul determined all his future when he uttered his prayer—a petition based on complete self-surrender: "What shall I do, Lord?" The events of today's lesson were an inevitable result. He witnessed for Christ at Damascus and Jerusalem, in spite of the humiliation of having to acknowledge that he had been in the wrong before, and in spite of the certain peril to his life that would lie in his so doing. He spent a long period of time in retirement at home in Tarsus, in preparation for his later work for Christ. And, finally, he was summoned to Antioch at a time of the Gentile church's need of just such a man as he had by that time become. All these

experiences grew out of his vision and his response to it. Paul was such a man as God could use at Antioch, an acceptable ambassador for the Lord, because he had indeed not been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Getting Ready to Be a Missionary

See The Topic for Intermediates and Seniors.

It Is Not Easy to Live Down One's Past

Coin of Damascus

The completeness of Paul's work of destruction in Jerusalem made it all the more imperative that no mistake be made this time. The wolf might throw off the sheep's clothing and again ravin the fold. Paul had come "to visit Cephas" (Gal. 1.18). He had not come to be inducted into the apostolic office. That authority he had received from the Lord Jesus, not from man (Gal. 1.1). But Paul wished to carry on his Gentile ministry in harmony with the apostles, and there was much that he could learn about the earthly life of Jesus from Simon Peter during those two weeks. But "they were afraid of him." The imperfect tense pictures the shrinking away from Paul as he presented himself. "He assayed to join himself to the disciples." The imperfect tense again shows that Paul did not give up without a struggle. He was deeply mortified beyond a doubt. The memory of Paul's fierce hatred of these men flared up like a flame. Criticism and fear demanded that Paul furnish proof of his sincerity before he be received as a brother in Christ.

It was a crucial moment for Paul and for Christianity. But Barnabas vouched for the correctness of Paul's story and for the genuineness of his conversion. It was a bold and a noble thing to do. "It was Barnabas who appreciated Paul; it was to him that the Church owes the most extraordinary of her founders," declares Renan. "Among the causes of the faith of the world we must count the generous movement of Barnabas, stretching out his hand to the suspected and forsaken Paul." The life of Barnabas seems to have been devoted to the ministry of those in distress. It is a noble ministry for any life.—Prof. A. T. Robertson, in The London Expositor.

Getting Ready at Jerusalem for his Career

It is surely an innocent use of the imagination to think of Paul and Peter sitting or walking together on the housetop and conversing of the great past. On one occasion their theme would be the Lord's early ministry in Galilee, so closely associated with Peter's opening manhood; on another, the discourses and scenes of the last hours before the crucifixion; on another, the death and burial, the glorious resurrection and ascension, and the experiences of the forty days. "Tell me all you can remember of the Master," would be the frequent request of the new disciple of him who had been so especially privileged as a witness. And it must often have come to pass that as they communed together of all those things that had happened, Jesus himself drew near, and their hearts burned within them.

Coin of Tarsus

What Peter could not tell him, James could. For he had shared the home at Nazareth, but had remained unbelieving until the resurrection **convinced** him. James would recount the story of the early years, and corroborate Peter's narrative of events from the Easter dawn to the Day of Pentecost.—Dr. F. B. Meyer, in Paul a Servant of Jesus Christ.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Paul in Arabia. See pages 236-241 of The Acts of the Apostles, by G. Campbell Morgan.

2. What we would think of Paul if we knew him on earth today. See Chapter IV, Paul as Seen by His Contemporaries, in The Character of Paul, by Charles E. Jefferson.

3. Could any other satisfactory name for Jesus' disciples have been selected than "Christians"? Compare the names given in Light from Oriental Life, in this lesson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. In what ways had Barnabas shown his fitness for missionary work? 2. Paul? 3. What motives induced the church at Antioch in Syria to give up Paul and Barnabas as missionaries? 4. How are men today "separated" for the work of the gospel? 5. What grade of men and women should we send as foreign missionaries? 6. Give the argument of Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch. 7. How had the Jews judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life"?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL CHAMPIONS AN UNPOPULAR CAUSE

Beginning the Lesson

Paul has been converted. Being such a man as he is, what is the first thing he is likely to do, as soon as he has recovered from the physical prostration accompanying his conversion? Think of it for a moment: Paul is at Damascus; he came in order to show Damascus that Jesus of Nazareth was the dead and discredited leader of an obstinate body of heretics; now, however, he knows that this Jesus of Nazareth is the living Son of God. What will he do? Paul at Damascus "straightway proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God." It was the only thing that a man like Paul could think of doing. He became an ambassador for Christ. He championed an unpopular cause, as our lesson topic states.

Getting Ready to Be a Missionary

The greatest leaders of Paul's race had found out the meaning of life alone with God, in the wilderness, or in the mountains, or on the edge of the desert. Moses had come face to face with God on Mount Sinai. Elijah had heard the still small voice speaking to him, far away from the rush and din of the world. John the Baptist got his preparation for his mission in the solitary wilderness undisturbed by people. Jesus had discovered in the desert how to come forth victorious over temptation, and there he had realized that his kingdom was not to rest on force and worldly power.

So, too, Paul now felt that he must go away from the city and live for a time in the heart of nature and open his soul to God. He decided to go to Arabia for his period of quiet and of meditation. He has not told us a word about his life in Arabia and none of his friends has given us any reports of these months of solitude and meditation. Today, if any man wished to prepare for a great career of ministry or missionary service, he would go to some college or university or seminary or training school and learn how to do the work which lay before him, and he would train his body with games of skill and athletic courses, so as to be at his very best in mind and heart and body. Paul had nothing of this sort open to him. He had finished his years of study, but they only prepared him to be a Jewish Rabbi, a teacher of the law. Now he wanted to learn how to tell the world the full message, the good news, which Jesus had brought to men. There was no school where this was taught. There were no Christian colleges or universities or seminaries yet. The best thing Paul could do was, therefore, to go away alone and read and think and let God teach him.

At last he felt that he was "ready." This is one of his great words—"I am now ready." The time of quiet was over and the busy life must begin. He felt sure he could make everybody believe in his Christ. It was all so plain and wonderful that people would be bound to listen as he told them what he had seen and known and felt! He decided to go back to Damascus and begin there—near the place where he had first seen Jesus and where the great change in his life had come.

But it was not as easy as he expected. In the first place he soon discovered that he needed to know more about the life of Jesus. He had not talked with anybody yet who had been with him in Galilee and in Jerusalem. He must learn more about Jesus before he could move people with his words. And then he found that the people did not want to hear about Jesus. The Jews in Damascus all thought Paul was a traitor. He had started for their city to persecute the followers of Jesus and now he was one of the followers himself, trying to make them believe. They decided to seize him and do to him what he used to do to the followers of Jesus. They would soon put him where he would not talk any more about this Galilean Teacher. They watched all the gates of the city so that Paul could not get away, and they had

men hunting for him through the streets. But some of Paul's friends put him in a great basket and in the dark of the night, by a long rope, they let him down the side of the wall and he got far away from the dangerous city before the morning sun came up.

He must have felt a strange thrill as he passed by the place where he saw the great light and heard the voice saying: "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" But he hurried on over the road through Galilee and came to Jerusalem, which he had left three years before. He had started out a persecutor. He came back a follower of Jesus.—Rufus M. Jones, in St. Paul the Hero.

Failure from Lack of Preparation

Once a pilot, only twenty-one years old, who had but just gained his license, was given the responsible task of taking one of the largest ocean steamers through New York harbor on a foggy day. It was his first important assignment. He was not ready for so great a responsibility, and was very nervous. He piloted the steamer safely through the most difficult parts of the narrow channel, and then ran her aground within sight of Sandy Hook. If he had waited until more experienced before assuming such a task, his career would not have been ruined at the start.

"The man who finds himself in the presence of a great duty or opportunity which he cannot take up or accept, because he is not prepared for it, cannot then go back to make the needful preparation. The soldier cannot learn the art of war in the face of the battle. The Christian cannot, in an unexpected emergency of temptation, gather in a moment all needed spiritual power. Not to be ready in advance for great duties or great needs, is to fail."

Living Down One's Past at Jerusalem

See the Topic for Young People and Adults.

The Greatness of Barnabas

When Barnabas went to Tarsus for Paul and brought him back to Antioch, he knew quite well what he was doing. He knew Paul was much the abler and stronger man. He knew if Paul came to Antioch he must inevitably take first place. But Barnabas never heeded that. All he cared for was the progress of the work. And perhaps this is the ultimate evidence of Barnabas' goodness. Because envy lurks even in good men's souls.

The story is told of William Jay, a great English preacher, that when he was getting old his deacons proposed to get a colleague for him. But the old gentleman was jealous for his position, and when his deacons made the proposition he said to them: "Well, you see, gentlemen, when two people ride on the back of one horse, one rides first; and I mean to ride first."

But now look at Barnabas. He knew that to bring Paul in would inevitably mean that he, Barnabas, would have to ride second. That is exactly what happened. "Barnabas and Paul" is the order in Acts XIII, but by chapter XV it is "Paul and Barnabas." You remember that Danton at the time of the French Revolution said, "Perish the name of Danton as long as France is saved." That is exactly how Barnabas felt: Perish the name of Barnabas as long as the Kingdom of God is furthered. He was willing that Paul should increase and he should decrease. He had that love which envieth not.—J. D. Jones, in Record of Christian Work.

Sentence Sermons

I will get ready, and then perhaps my chance will come.—Lincoln.

It is never too soon to get ready to do a great task.—John R. Mott.

Be a young Barnabas in your school, on your playground; always have kind words ready; have the spirit of encouragement in your heart, and it will get on to your lips.—J. H. Jowett.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 2. In what circumstances were they sent out? 3. Why, do you suppose, did Mark desert the two missionaries at Perga? 4. From what city did the missionaries start? 5. What was the last city they reached in our lesson text? 6. How do we distinguish the two Antioches? 7. What great missionary heroes of modern times are worthy of being mentioned as second only to Paul? 8. What are the words in which Christ directed his followers to carry on the work of foreign missions? (Golden Text.) 9. What is your church doing to obey this Great Commission?

LESSON V—JULY 29

THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

GOLDEN TEXT: Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28.19, 20

LESSON Acts 13.1-52

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67

ACTS 13.1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there,* prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. 14 But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. 46. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying,*

> I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
> That thou shouldest be for salvation unto
> the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES CHOSEN AND ORDAINED, verses 1-3. In the flourishing Christian church at Antioch there were numerous prophets and teachers, men of special inspiration. Among these was the energetic and lovable Barnabas of Cyprus. Others included Symeon the Black—doubtless an African; Lucius of Cyrene (the province in North Africa lying next to Egypt), who perhaps was one of the Cyrenian evangelists who had established this church at Antioch (Acts 11.20); Manaen—another form of the Hebrew Menahem (2 Kings 15.14)—who was the "foster-brother" of Herod the Tetrarch (Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great), and was seemingly a person of some social importance, and, finally, Paul of Tarsus. Apparently the historian meant Paul's place, at the end of the list, to be emphatic, just as was Barnabas', at the beginning of the roll. These five leaders of the Antiochan church were evidently Grecian Jews.

"We know nothing of Symeon and Lucius and Manaen, and yet it is good to have their names, for they remind us of the host of faithful witnesses of the truth who stood back of the Christian movement, and encouraged its leaders to carry on. George Eliot, in one of her fine tales, speaks of 'the faithful who are not famous.' What should we do without them? All great causes demand great leaders. Without Paul and Peter and Barnabas the early Church would have been as an undisciplined army without officers, or as a rope of sand; but Niger and Lucius and Manaen were needed as surely as Barnabas and Paul" (The New Outlook).

While the church at Antioch, under the leadership of these five men, was carrying on its services of worship, prayer and fasting, an advance movement was initiated under the direction of God. It is probable that the prayer of the church was "awaiting upon God for special guidance on a matter already occupying their thought; this matter was surely the question of a forward movement into the Roman Empire." Paul and Barnabas, indeed, may have been thinking of this question when they had brought with them from Jerusalem John Mark (Acts 12.25).

Whenever and wherever men and women are unitedly spiritual, prayerful, self-denying, carefully taught in Christian truth, and waiting upon the Spirit of God for his guidance in a matter of profound importance to his work, then and there the scene is laid for a mighty Christian enterprise to have its auspicious beginning or to advance its success.

At that juncture the Holy Spirit directed the Antioch Christians to "separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work wherewith I have called them"—for missionary work among the Gentiles. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," is the way in which the Holy Spirit spoke. See the First Topic.

The church sent away their ablest men, their most eloquent preachers, as foreign missionaries. "The progress of that missionary endeavor should remain to all time an impressive lesson to churches and mission boards in the selection of missionaries. The foreign fields need the best. I have known a generosity in giving money and a selfishness in withholding men."

When, with special significance, the other Christians had fasted, prayed and laid their hands on the two missionaries, they sent them away on their mission. That is, they released them for this new ministry—the Greek verb here translated "sent away" signifies rather "set free." This dedication service was somewhat like our modern farewell services for missionaries. The unusual feature of laying of hands on Paul and Barnabas may be understood as not constituting a formal ordination—for the missionaries had long been doing the work of apostles—but as signifying a bestowal of the blessing of the Antioch church on its representatives in the foreign field.

"These early Christians did not seem to be much affected by the argument that 'There are heathen enough at home'; in Antioch there were a half-million of pagans when the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul'" (Charles R. Erdman).

II. ON TO CYPRESS, verses 4, 5. Under orders of their Commander-in-Chief—"being sent forth by the Spirit"—Barnabas and Paul set out on their forward movement into the Gentile world. They went down the River Orontes to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch, sixteen miles distant, and there sailed for the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea.

"Historically this is the precise moment at which the foreign missionary enterprise actually began. The fact that we are Christians ourselves, dates back to that obedience of those men in that little ship. They took the little tree of Christianity and transplanted it from the cramping flower-pot of Judaism into the soil of humanity of the whole world. It is an apparently tiny act which, in simple fact, when looked at down the perspective of the centuries, is seen to have changed the history of the world" (Basil Mathews).

At Salamis, the nearest harbor of Cyprus, they stopped awhile, and preached in the synagogue of the Jews. Being traveling preachers, they were everywhere, as we shall see, given at least one hearing in each Jewish synagogue visited.

This missionary preaching tour took Barnabas and Paul through the whole island of Cyprus. At Paphos, the center of Roman influence on the southwest coast of the island, Paul had a thrilling experience with a certain Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer or magician, as a result of which—and of Paul's preaching—the local Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, became a Christian.

From this time onward Luke, in writing The Acts, calls his hero by his Roman name, Paul; for now Paul is definitely committed to the task of evangelizing the Roman world.

III. ON TO ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA, verses 13-52. Proceeding northwestward from Paphos by sea, the missionaries reached the Roman province of Pamphylia, which stretched along the southern coast of Asia Minor, and then went to Perga, its capital, a few miles up the River Cestrus. Here John Mark, who had been serving them as an attendant, left the missionaries and returned to Jerusalem. "The youth had felt the spell of the adventure upon which Paul and Barnabas were entering. But he had not counted the cost. It may be that the terrors of the journey into the great passes of the Taurus Mountains made the youth turn back" (Edward Shillito). A grave consequence of his desertion will appear in a later lesson.

From Perga Paul and Barnabas hastened northward over the mountains, on wretched country roads, "in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers" (2 Cor. 11.26), quite one hundred miles, until they reached another Antioch than that at which they had begun their journey; they were now in "Pisidian Antioch." Here, on the Sabbath day, the missionaries, having as usual entered a synagogue, were invited, also as usual, to address the persons present.

In an amazing way Paul addressed his hearers as "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God," and by the latter phrase he meant the Gentiles. Later in his sermon he coupled the Gentiles with the race of Abraham, thus: "Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this Salvation sent." The theme of his sermon has been called "God's Greatest Gift to Us." He recalled the glories of Israel's past from Moses to David—a theme which the Jews never tired of hearing—recounted the goodness of God to them and noted especially his promise of a Savior; he told them that Jesus, who was announced by John the Baptist as the Savior, had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures by his death and resurrection, and then he urged them all to accept him, for in no other way could they be saved. He closed with a prophecy of Habakkuk, bidding them beware lest in rejecting this salvation they called down upon themselves as severe a judgment as that inflicted by the Chaldean armies on the Jewish nation when it refused to heed Habakkuk's warning.

So convincing was Paul as a speaker that the next Sabbath "almost the whole city" assembled to hear him ("evidently little else was talked of during the week"). Then, however, the more influential Jews, made jealous by the sight of such a crowd, contradicted Paul and slandered the missionaries. "These men saw that the Gentiles also were listening with eagerness, and that Paul was proclaiming to them the same possibility of privilege as he was proclaiming to the Hebrew" (G. Campbell Morgan).

How insidious, overpowering and defrauding is jealousy! It steals upon us unawares; it warps our judgment, and enslaves our wills; and, unlike that mercy which is of the quality of real love, and which "blesseth him that gives and him that takes," it robs both us and others of happiness of heart and peace of mind. Rejoicing in others' good fortune adds to our own; begrudging it decreases our own.

Definitely and frankly Paul and Barnabas then announced: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you" (it was Christ's command, Acts 1.8). But, "seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life—lo, we turn to the Gentiles." And Paul quoted Isaiah 49.6: "I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles." Here we have "a turning point in Paul's history and of Christianity as known to the author of Acts, though the expression was to be repeated time and again; compare 17.5; 18.6; 19.8; 28.25-28. The words 'Lo, we turn to the Gentiles,' were of course in the first instance uttered only with a local bearing, though they involved a principle significant of probable future cases" (Century Bible).

"Every man imputeth himself," says Tennyson. It is a startling thought that by our attitude toward Jesus Christ we reveal our worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life. After a battle with Pompey in which many thousands lost their lives, Cæsar stood on the battlefield and exclaimed, "Alas! he would have it so!" If ours is the way of death instead of the way of life it is because we would have it so.

When the Gentiles heard Paul's announcement, they were glad, and glorified the word of God. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." "This expresses the Pauline and Apostolic doctrine of predestination, according to which God desires the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2.4; 4.10), but inasmuch as he foresees that some, in the exercise of their free will, will actually repent and believe, while others will refuse to do so, he ordains the former to eternal life, and the latter to eternal death, Rom. 8.28-30" (One Volume Commentary). "There is certainly nothing in this passage to indicate that the divine disposing of the Gentiles to believe was an eternal or an irresistible decree; nothing more is indicated than an effectual work of grace, accepted by the Gentiles and for that reason effectual" (Lyman Abbott).

The Jews joined forces with "the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city" in persecuting Paul and Barnabas, and finally drove them out

of the city. Shaking off the dust of their feet against them—thus saying, as it were, that they left them to their fate—the two missionaries proceeded to Iconium. The Christians at Pisidian Antioch remained true to the faith, and were filled with a double blessing—"joy and the Holy Spirit."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

And fasted, verse 2. "There was only one fast, the day of atonement, appointed in the Law. But it had become the practise for pious Jews to fast twice a week; and it was natural that those who became Christians should continue the habit. Fasting, then, was not especially a Christian practise. It was really part of the asceticism which was so highly esteemed and inculcated in all the oriental religions: we might almost call it a practise of natural religion in the East."

They went into the synagogue and sat down, verse 13. The synagogue was always a plain, rectangular building erected on the highest spot in the neighborhood, or having a tall pole on the roof to make it conspicuous. Unlike the scribes who desired to have the chief seats (Mk. 12.38, 39), Paul and Barnabas sat down with the congregation, the chief seats were around the ark, or chest, at one end of the building, where the sacred rolls were kept. Before the ark hung a curtain and lamps. In front was a platform with its reading desk, or pulpit. The men and women sat on opposite sides of the room. During prayers all rose and stood with their faces toward Jerusalem.

After the reading of the law, verse 15. An illuminating view of procedure in a synagogue is given in this verse. A lesson was read from the Pentateuch, and one from the Prophets—which included the earlier historical books. As we learned in a lesson from Mark, the "rulers," who were more like lay readers than ministers, had, as an official duty, to see to it that fit persons were invited to lead the worship. It was because they noted that the two strangers on this Sabbath looked like men of education and character, able to exhort in "the law of the Lord," that the rulers invited Paul and Barnabas to address the gathering.

The Jews were filled with jealousy and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, verse 45. Jewish feeling on these subjects is intense today in Palestine. A Jew said recently of a Hebrew Christian that he would like to die before the latter did "so that he might hear what the turncoat would say for himself when he came to stand before God." Another Jew said that he would give up ten years of his own life "if it would send the mission agent so much the sooner to the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Where was Antioch? What have we learned about Barnabas? What important events in the life of Paul led up to his going to Antioch? When Jesus sent The Twelve on their first preaching tour, how many did he send together? Why?

Why Antioch in Syria Is Notable

We learned last week that the church at Antioch in Syria was the first church in which the gospel was preached to Gentiles as well as Jews, and that it was the first church whose members were called Christians. Today we learn that it became famous for yet a third reason—it was the first church to inaugurate foreign missions. The formal consecration of Barnabas and Saul to the work of missionaries was the beginning of the great missionary movement which is still in progress.

The Beginning of the Church's Missionary Crusade

"The greatest missionary book in the world is the Bible. The greatest book in the Bible is The Acts of the Apostles; the greatest missionary chapter in The Acts is the thirteenth; the greatest missionary verses in the thirteenth chapter are the first three verses."

The story of the ordination of Paul and Barnabas to the work of missionaries and the sending them forth on their first great missionary journey is told by Luke in the first three verses of our text, so briefly, so almost casually, that it gives to one who does not know the whole history of The Acts no idea about the far-reaching significance. In these few verses we see inaugurated the first missionary movement, the beginning of the world evangelization which fulfilled Christ's command when

he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all Nations." It was the year 47 A. D., according to the generally accepted chronology. Some scholars give 45, others 46, as the date.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Cyprus is the largest island in the Eastern Mediterranean. On a clear day it is visible from Seleucia, the port of Antioch in Syria. Its name was probably derived from the Greek word *Kupros,* copper, for there were rich copper mines on the island. Its greatest breadth, which Paul and Barnabas traversed, is one hundred and forty miles. There were several reasons why the missionaries went first to Cyprus: the island was only a few hours' sail from Seleucia; Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, and he would have friends there; its copper mines had attracted a large settlement of Jews, and some of them were already Christians, for Cypriotes had been the first to sail to Antioch and proclaim Christ there (Acts 11.20; 21.16). The nearest harbor was Salamis. The chief city was Paphos.

The Provinces of Asia Minor

The Peninsula which we now call Asia Minor was divided in Paul's day for administrative purposes into the Roman provinces of *Asia,* on the west, *Bithynia* and *Pontus* on the north, *Galatia* and *Cappadocia* in the center, and *Lycia, Pamphylia* and *Cilicia* on the south. Notice the location of each on the accompanying sketch

Roman Provinces of Asia Minor

map. The popular names of the various districts were different, and it is these popular names which are often used in The Acts.

From Cyprus Paul and his companions sailed to *Atalia,* one of the chief cities of the province of Pamphylia. On the River Cestrus, several miles up the coast,

was *Perga*. Professor Ramsay's theory is that at Perga Paul suffered an attack of malarial fever (Gal. 4.13) and was obliged to seek higher levels. Be that as it may, we know that he did not tarry long at Perga, but pushed on northward, crossing the Taurus Range into the province of Galatia on the high central tableland of the peninsula.

We hear in The Acts of several *districts* in the southern part of Galatia. *Antioch of Pisidia,* where Paul and Barnabas first preached, was really a city of the district of Phrygia; it bordered the district of Pisidia, however, and might therefore be called "of" or "towards" Pisidia. There Paul was nearly four thousand feet above sea level, and its pure air must have proved refreshing and health-giving after a sojourn in Perga. The city had been made by Augustus Cæsar the chief center of all the Roman colonies in Asia Minor.

Coin of Antioch of Pisidia
The figure is that of the Moon-god, the deity worshiped at Antioch. The crescent of the moon is seen behind his shoulders.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"We actually give a boy one hundred per cent in hygiene who can pass a perfect examination on the subject, even though his teeth are decayed, his hands dirty, and his shoulders stooped," a high school teacher was heard to say. "It is no trick at all," he continued, "to teach a boy so that he can recite glibly the evils of cigarette smoking for instance, but so to train him that he will not smoke cigarettes is another matter."

It is not enough to teach the facts concerning Paul's life; it is not enough to lead your pupils to admire the man, his intellect, his greatness as a thinker and theologian, his forcefulness as a preacher, his success as a missionary, his power as a writer. God has revealed to us great truths through Paul. For these truths his record has been preserved, and for these truths it is abundantly worth while to devote six months to the study of his life and letters. Everywhere the record rings with trumpet-calls to action. Do not let them go unheeded.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson

In the history of the Christian Church and of its work, as well as in a study of its duties and possibilities in our own times, there is one fundamental fact of which we dare not lose sight. This is the fact of the Holy Spirit; or, more specifically, the fact that it is the Holy Spirit whose presence in the Church is a condition of its power, and who inspires its most notable achievements. At Pentecost this was true, and now we find this true at Antioch. The work of foreign missions is essentially an activity of the Holy Spirit. Verses 4-52 of Acts 13 reveal to us Paul and Barnabas on a foreign missionary itineration, in the course of which they are doing the work for which the Spirit himself has prepared them, and in which he is directing them. Verses 1-3, however, show how the Spirit made known his will to them and to others. First, there is a picture of a Spirit-filled church, alert to catch the slightest token of his guidance. Second, there is a clear statement of the activity of the Spirit: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul." And third, there is the thrilling recital of the co-operation of a Spirit-directed church with the Spirit who directs it: "Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." And so the mighty work of foreign missions was successfully begun.

How the Holy Spirit Puts Forth Missionaries

I wonder how they came to be so sure that thus the Spirit of God spake. I do not believe at all that it was a sudden prophetic utterance given to some one ecstatic believer. I believe that in the midst of this church's prayerful life there grew up a conviction that the Lord had been enlarging, training and equipping two of their fellow-laborers, and that the meaning of it all was that the great harvest field was calling these two out of their midst. God had set the light of great enterprises in the eyes of these two men and was preparing them. One of them had kept a secret word for long in his heart: "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He knew that the time of its full revealing would come, and presently

it did come. The church interpreted it for him. It was by the sight of the great mighty-faithed Barnabas, and the indomitable energy and courage of Paul among these Christians of Antioch, by the unspeakable conviction that there was that come to pass in these two which could not be cabined within the discussions of a local church meeting, that the irresistible missionary argument was brought to bear upon this church.

Now I cannot but feel that it is in this fashion that God speaks to the church still concerning its too easily forgotten tasks. God is always putting forth his men. They arise with the call of God plainly upon them, the capacity for long visions shining in them. He finds them in a little Syrian community, and lo! Paul and Barnabas are given to make great history. He moves in a Jesuit fraternity and Francis Xavier becomes pioneer of the cross. He is at work in little Christian communities, in Scotch hamlets and Welsh villages, and amid English factories and workshops, and now it is a Moffat and a Livingstone, a Morrison or a Mackay, a Chalmers or a Griffith John that is thrust forth. God finds them, and when the live and loyal churches in the midst of which they have arisen look upon them in Spirit-opened eyes, they know that in their appearing the Spirit is speaking to the churches.—Thomas Yates.

A Differently Worded Record

The method of God is not different today from that which prevailed in the past. In our time a church convention, after due consideration of qualifications and opportunities, decides to send missionaries to some promising field, and on the minutes of the session it is recorded as an action of the body that has exercised its consecrated wisdom in the transaction. If the writers of the apostolic age had been chronicling the event, they would have written that the Spirit said to the church: Separate me these men for the work to which I have called them. Both records would be true, but the second would be in greater harmony with all the facts. We have not yet learned to write the story of the church or the proceedings of Christian bodies in such vivid and vital terms.—Editorial in The Christian Century.

Less Definite Calls

What makes a sudden call seem so overpowering? Is it not simply the surge of emotion which it creates in a man? And are these two to be identified—the call itself and the accompanying emotion? The man to whom a highly emotional summons comes is usually emotional about everything. He is likely, for instance, to be much more excited than another in the same position, when he feels himself falling in love, or when he watches a drama. There are men of the more sensitive, highly strung natures and there are men of the more phlegmatic type. Is it reasonable to suppose that when God calls them their feelings will be stirred with equal intensity?

Stripped of the emotional elements, is not a call simply a realization that God has made you capable of doing a particular work—that there is a real way in which you can pay back your debt to him—that he has shown you a means by which you, you specifically, can live and help live?

Some calls may come almost entirely free from emotional surgings. It is a matter of cold fact that many of the most useful ministers and missionaries have been undramatically led into their work by the mild process of their own logical thought. One missionary put his ideas on paper as follows:

1. There is greater need abroad than at home for college-trained men who can learn languages easily.
2. I am college-trained and learn languages easily.
3. Therefore God calls men to go to the foreign field.

William Ellery Channing had great difficulty in his youth in deciding between medicine and the ministry; and, like many if not most of the preachers of today, he chose the latter profession as a result, not of a peremptory vision, but of sober inquiry as to where he would be most serviceable.

Look thoroughly into the matter and you find that comparatively few calls are sudden and passionate. Your calling is likely to be like that of Samuel Chapman Armstrong. His biographer relates that at the end of the Civil War he found himself a young man with little to live on but his distinction as a soldier. He wanted a call, but no divine ecstacy seized him. His call came, however, by the avenue of the common sense which God had given him for just such a purpose.

He remembered that his boyhood in Hawaii in a missionary home had given him a uniquely intimate acquaintance with one of the backward races; and during the war he had commanded a regiment of Negroes. Two ideas finally met in his mind: (1) the only future of the Negro race lay in education, and (2) he was singularly well fitted to take up such an enterprise. The result of this "call" was the renowned Hampton Institute, which General Armstrong dedicated to God and to the liberation from ignorance of a mighty people. He himself later confessed that he was "seemingly led."

"There is a fatal error in the attempt to standardize the divine methods." God will call you in the way that suits you best, more probably through your own observation than by heavenly visions or voices. The useful work which you can do well, you may depend upon it, is divinely your work.—Douglas Horton.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The condition of the Roman world which was to be evangelized. See pages 31-44, The First Age of Christianity, by Ernest F. Scott; pages 98-103, The Acts of the Apostles, by G. Campbell Morgan.

2. The Christian attitude today toward the rights of other nationalities than one's own. See Chapter II, Christianity and the Race Problem, by J. H. Oldham.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who were Jupiter and Mercury? 2. Why did the people of Lystra call Paul Mercury rather than Jupiter? 3. What prominent helper of Paul later came from Lystra? (Acts 16.1.) 4. What did Paul write to him about his own experiences at this time? (2 Tim. 3.10-12.) 5. In what ways was Paul's address to the people at Lystra different from that at Pisidian Antioch? 6. Why did Paul make the two different? 7. What qualities does Paul display in this lesson? 8. Trace Paul's first missionary journey, by cities reached, from Syrian Antioch to Derbe and back. 9. Do I ever permit undeserved honor, such as Paul and Barnabas refused to receive, to have a place in my life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW PAUL FOUND HIS LIFE WORK

Beginning the Lesson

Adventure—this is what we are to think about today. For young people—and for older people, too. Our subject has the thrills of travel in foreign lands, the sight of strange places, the mingling with strange people, the hearing of strange languages, and the fascination of not knowing what yet more exciting experiences the next day or even hour may bring. It has also the adventure of the carrying into such new surroundings and to such strange people of the most thrilling news that the world ever has heard—the good news of the power and love of Christ.

One Sunday afternoon many years ago a minister was preaching in a small country chapel in Wales. He was to preach that evening in Penmorva where he would have a far larger chapel and far larger congregation. Evidently the latter opportunity was greatly upon his mind, for over and over in his afternoon address he cried, "O Lord, remember Penmorva!" His congregation was restive. Then suddenly, after one of these ejaculations, the earnest voice of a young girl cried out, "O Lord, remember the world!" Instantly, the whole atmosphere was changed, and the preacher himself said, "Oh, yes, that is better—much better."

Paul and Barnabas had been preaching to the people with such success, that not only had large numbers believed in the Christ whom they preached but the church was ready and anxious to be the means of making Christ known far and near. Whom did the church send as their representatives? How were Paul and Barnabas chosen? How were they ordained for their work? Where did they go first? Why? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

When Missionaries Came to Our English Ancestors

A Hindu, Narayan Sheshadri, a Brahmin (the highest caste in India), accepted the Christian faith and became a missionary among his own people. When he visited our country he was introduced to an audience as an evidence that must satisfy everyone of the value of Christian missions. This introduction touched the pride of the lordly Brahmin, and he began his talk thus:

"My friends, if I had ever had any doubt as to the value of Christian missions, that doubt would be removed as I stand here and look into your bright and intelli-

gent faces, and consider the facts in the case. When my ancestors were among the lordliest persons on earth, considering themselves, and being considered by others, as one with the gods, worthy of divine honors, your ancestors were among the most degraded of human beings, looked down on and despised by those of my race. Yet by Christian missionaries your fathers were sought out and won to Christ, in consequence you now sit here, clothed and in your right mind, as a living proof of the value of Christian missions, concerning the interests of which we are to consult together this afternoon."

One who long afterward recalled Mr. Sheshadri's speech, added: "That was a truth we do not always consider as we should. I recalled that when the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, visited India with Dean Stanley, it was said that the India officials sent into the jungle and lassoed a few specimens of the ancient race from which the English people are supposed to have descended."

In the time of Paul most of England was covered with morasses and dense forests, in which wild beasts abounded. The people were divided into tribes that were often at war with one another. Their clothing was chiefly of hides and furs. They had never heard of Jesus Christ. They worshiped many gods—gods of sky and wood and mountain and stream. The oak was especially venerated. Their priests, who were called Druids, professed to practise magic and this gave them great power over the people.

When the Romans conquered Britain they civilized it, taught the people the arts and crafts of peace, and, best of all, brought to them the gospel. No one knows who was the first foreign missionary to our forefathers in Britain—"perchance some Christian trader from Gaul, or a Christian legionary from Italy, or even a Christian slave, was the first who brought the Good News."

Missionary Pioneers

When the first missionaries went to the island of Panay, one of the Philippine group, they were amazed at the number of people in that Roman Catholic country who came to hear them and seemed so eager to have the Bible explained. Nine months only had passed when there was brought to the missionaries a petition saying that the thirteen thousand signers were Protestants and wished to be taught and organized into churches. The missionaries at first thought the people did not know what they were asking for, but they became convinced of the earnestness of these peasants. It was not till some time afterwards that they learned how the way had been prepared for the gospel. Padre Juan, a Roman Catholic priest, had come to Luzon forty years before, and after a while had been sent to the penal station in Paragua Island by the friars because he was "teaching false doctrines," and there he had died. He had gained the love of the peasants, and they had believed in him. He had taught them that Christ was their Savior, he had read to them from his Bible, and he had told them that white men, different from friars, would some day come to teach them, and they would know they were true teachers because they would have the same Book. The missionaries brought the same Book, the people had learned of Padre Juan's prophecy from their fathers, and they were ready to receive them as the true teachers.

Said Livingstone on his return home after spending sixteen years in Africa: "I am going back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity: do you carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you." His work and that of all other missionaries who have now rest from their labors is left with us to carry on. What are we doing to help in preparing the open paths for Christianity throughout the world?

Sentence Sermons

Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest.—Jesus.

God needs every man for some plan.—S. D. Gordon.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. In what way did Paul help a disabled man at Lystra? 2. Why did his act so greatly surprise the people there? 3. Why did they think Paul was Mercury and Barnabas Jupiter? 4. Why did the two apostles not understand what the people were talking about? 5. When Paul learned of their plans, what were his feelings? 6. In the words of the Golden Text, at this time did Paul wish to "be abased," or did he wish to "abound"? 7. How do you account for the fact that the people of Lystra so quickly turned against Paul and Barnabas?

LESSON VI—AUGUST 5

PAUL IN A PAGAN COUNTRY

GOLDEN TEXT: I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound. Philippians 4.12

LESSON Acts 14.1-28 DEVOTIONAL READING Matthew 5.10-16

ACTS 14.8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. 9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, 10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. 11 And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A CRIPPLE CURED AT LYSTRA, verses 8-10. At Lystra Paul and Barnabas were face to face with stark paganism. Apparently there were no Jews in the city and few Romans. There being no synagogue, Paul began to preach outdoors. One day he noticed, on the ground near him, a lifelong cripple, who was listening with an eager attention that revealed to the apostle a faith which was sufficient for the man's healing. Suddenly Paul interrupted his address by commanding the man, in a loud voice: "Stand upright upon thy feet!" Up sprang the cripple, able to walk. Compare Jesus' words to the man with a palsied arm: "Stretch forth thy hand!" (Mt. 12.13). In each case there was immediate cure.

"The men of Lystra looked upon it as a great material miracle, but the deeper fact was the spiritual miracle that lay behind it: the cripple's apprehension of the truth, and the application of it to his own case; the preacher's knowledge of it, and his keenness of sight in the man's operation of faith in the living Lord. That was the wonderful thing" (G. Campbell Morgan).

II. THE PAGAN PEOPLE ATTEMPT TO WORSHIP THE HEALERS, verses 11-13. The amazed people cried out in their own (Lycaonian) language: "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!" According to mythology Jupiter and Mercury already had twice come to this very country of Lycaonia, the best known story being that of Baucis and Philemon. This poor couple, the only persons who welcomed the two gods with hospitality in the story, had been richly rewarded; for their sakes it was ordained that neither should survive the other's death, and thus that neither should know the sorrow of mourning. Now the healing of the cripple by Paul had convinced the people that once more the reward-bestowing gods had appeared among them in human form—"in the likeness of men." "Little did they know how nearly they expressed the central fact in the Christian religion," for in Jesus Christ God had indeed come down in the likeness of men.

It is both a joyous and a sobering fact that every Christian man or woman may at almost any moment be unconsciously representing to some one else—however imperfectly—the likeness of God.

They called Barnabas, Jupiter, their chief god; and Paul, Mercury, the messenger of the gods, "because he was the chief speaker." Another reason may have been because Paul, if tradition is correct, was smaller and less imposing than Barnabas. In 2 Cor. 10.10 Paul quotes his enemies as saying of him, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech is of no account," and all tradition agrees that he was a

little man. But see the reason given by Professor Ramsay in Light from Oriental Life.

In writing of the Bamangwato tribe in the great Kalahari desert Livingstone said: "Their conceptions of the Deity are of the most vague and contradictory nature, and the name of God conveys no more to their understanding than the idea of superiority. However, they do not hesitate to apply the name to their chiefs. I was every day shocked by being addressed by that title, and though it has often furnished me with a text from which to tell them of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, yet it deeply pained me."

It was not long before a procession of white-clad priests, leading garland-decked oxen and followed by an excited, noisy, pagan rabble, was passing through crowded streets on its tumultuous way to the place of sacrifice. At the gates where was the temple of Jupiter, there the priest of Jupiter prepared to offer sacrifice to the two strangers whom the people conceived to be gods.

"To accept the popular tribute of being more than a man has wrecked many a good career, but it has never yet produced a superman" (Henry van Dyke).

III. PAUL'S WORDS BY WHICH HE RESTRAINS THE PEOPLE, verses 14-18. The people had understood Paul's preaching delivered in Greek, yet because of their excitement over the miracle they shouted to one another in their native language, which was evidently unknown to Paul and Barnabas. But when at length the apostles realized what was going on, they tore their outer garments from throat to girdle, in token of their dismay, and rushed among the people to stop such idolatry. "They were horrified that, unknowingly and by mistake, they had been helping forward the very heathen worship they had hoped to destroy."

"Men!" they now cried (as Moffatt's translation forcefully expresses it), "What is this you are doing? We are but human—with natures like your own. The gospel which we are preaching to you is to turn from such futile ways, to the living God!" Paul then spoke of God's long suffering: "In the generations gone by he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," and then of God's merciful goodness to them; they had not been wholly without knowledge of God, for the rain and fruitful seasons, which had filled them with food and gladness, were his gifts, gifts which had borne witness to him. Rain was regarded by them as a special sign of divine favor. This address reminds one vividly of Paul's words in Rom. 1.20; there he intimated that men ought surely to have recognized God from the very manifestations of his power and goodness in nature.

Note that in the few simple truths of natural religion possessed by the peasants of Lystra Paul found material upon which to base his teaching and a lesson wherewith to lift them to a conception of God and of true religion. This is the method which the wisest missionaries today are using.

"When we take Christ to the great nations of the East, it is not in a spirit of contempt for the only religion they know; it is rather with thankfulness to God that they have any religion, and that God hath not left himself without a witness in their hearts; and when we preach Christ under the shadow of Chinese pagodas and Indian temples, it is only that we may change the lamps of Confucius and Buddha for the brightness of the morning star; for Christ is the desire of all nations, and these great creators of religious thought in a hundred nations kept vigil till he appeared, were his unconscious light-bearers, and were as those who watched for the coming of the morning, even of the perfect day of him who is the Light of Life" (W. J. Dawson).

IV. THE PEOPLE TURN AGAINST PAUL AND TRY TO KILL HIM, verse 19. Jealous Jews who had driven the apostles from Pisidian Antioch now followed them to Lystra. They easily succeeded in persuading the people of Lystra to turn against Paul, for the latter were doubtless irritated because they had mistaken for a God this Jew who was not in good standing even among fellow Jews.

"It is dangerous to meddle with the passions of a mob. It is dangerous to call their gods vain things; it is dangerous in the midst of their superstitious emotions, when they want to worship you, to make them feel ridiculous by having mistaken you for a god. Mobs are ticklish things to handle. This crowd grows silent, grows sulky; begins to listen to the hostile Jews from Iconium and Antioch. 'If they are not gods, then they healed the cripple by the power of the Evil One.'

So when Paul tries to preach next day he can scent trouble in the air. The crowd is hostile. Soon the stones are flying. He sees there is no escape. He is hit. He is down. His eyes are closed, but his brain is forming vivid pictures of another stoning twelve years before in which he himself took part, and of a dead face that was the face of an angel. Soon a stunning blow on the head sends his pictures flying, and Barnabas is looking on another dead face, and looking out into the lonely years without his comrade. But Paul is not dead. It would take more than that to kill him while his great life work remained undone" (J. Paterson Smyth).

The people thought Paul was dead, and they dragged his body outside the city. Read 2 Tim. 3.11.

How true to much of history and of life is this tragedy! Jesus acclaimed, and then crucified; Paul worshiped, and then murderously assaulted; Lincoln a victor, and then assassinated; many another man or woman today triumphant, and tomorrow apparently forever overthrown. But if there be in one the spirit of Christian devotion to duty at whatever cost, there can be no real defeating.

V. PAUL RECOVERS AND LEAVES WITH BARNABAS FOR DERBE, verse 20. As the disciples stood around the unconscious Paul (then his work had not been in vain, after all—there were Christian disciples now in Lystra, Christians brave enough to befriend him), Paul arose and entered the city. His ability even to stand, after such treatment as he had received, seems to represent quite as much of a miracle as had the cripple's standing on his feet; but Paul was able, next day, to make a journey of several hours to Derbe. The Acts seems to regard this recovery as miraculous.

VI. THE RETURN TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, verses 21-27. After leading many persons at Derbe to become disciples of Jesus, Paul and Barnabas left this city also. Derbe proved to be the limit of Paul's first missionary journey. Though it was not far from Tarsus, Paul's old home, the apostles, instead of going there, turned back on their route. They went to Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, in each place aiding in the selection of church officers, and urging the converts whom they had made on their outward journey to remain steadfast in the Christian faith, regardless of any persecution or other difficulty which they might encounter. Then the missionaries went on down to Perga, and thence to the port Attalia, where they sailed for Seleucia, the port of Antioch in Syria.

"We are impressed with the fiery spirit of the evangelists on this journey, now completed. Authority, insistence, courage, invincibility, they showed. They came to no city to discuss philosophies, but they came to preach Christ. They came into the midst of all forms of religious life to recognize the elements of truth, but not to leave men in gloom. They came to correct the mistake, to redeem the truth from error, and to set men upon the highway. They were intrepid, daring, fiery spirits. And it is only thus that the Kingdom is ever to be won for our God and his Christ" (G. Campbell Morgan).

On arriving at Antioch in Syria, Paul and Barnabas reported to the church all that God had done through them, with emphasis on the fact that he had opened a door of Christian faith unto the Gentiles. Here we have the first recorded welcome to returned foreign missionaries. The first missionary journey had occupied at least a year, had covered about 1,400 miles, and had made it crystal clear that western Asia was ready to receive the Gospel. The work of foreign missions had successfully begun.

"This great enterprise which Jesus instituted and superintends, in which Paul worked under Jesus as his living Lord, is still in process of accomplishment. Jesus the world's Christ is calling all men unto himself, that they may learn from him how to be true sons of God and true brothers to other men" (Edward I. Bosworth).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The gods are come down to us, verse 11. Egyptians and Greeks believed that the gods often assumed human bodies and visited the earth, to reward the good and punish the evil. Homer, Vergil and Ovid record many such visits. To quote from Homer (Cowper's translation):

"For, in similitude of strangers, oft
The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
The outrageous, and the righteous deeds of men."

They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, verse 12. Two archæologists, one from Manchester, England, and the other from Baltimore, in excavating recently in the valley of Lystra unearthed a tablet inscribed to Zeus and Hermes (the Greek names for Jupiter and Mercury). The tablet is a proof that these gods were worshiped at Lystra, and therefore it was quite natural for the people to identify Paul and Barnabas with them.

Jupiter and Mercury

Jupiter holds in one hand a scepter, and in the other a thunderbolt; and the globe of the world is beneath him. Mercury holds in one hand the caduceus, and in the other a bag or purse, the emblem of commerce.

Professor William M. Ramsay, in his Cities of St. Paul, gives this explanation of the reason why Barnabas was called Jupiter the chief god, and Paul was called Mercury:

"The same qualities which mark out Paul to us as a leader, marked him out to the populace of Lycaonia as the agent and subordinate. The western mind regards the leader as the active and energetic partner; but the oriental mind considers the leader to be the person who sits still and does nothing, while his subordinates speak and work for him. Hence in the truly oriental religions the chief god sits apart from the world, communicating with it through his messenger and subordinate; the more statuesque figure of Barnabas was therefore taken by the orientals as the chief god, and the active orator, Paul, as his messenger, communicating his wishes to men."

He gave you from heaven rains, verse 17. Professor Ramsay gives us the interesting information that to the present day in Paul's own Asia Minor a bounteous spring flowing from the rock or the earth and transforming the ground through which it flows from a dry desert into a fruitful garden, is called by those who enjoy its benefits, *Hudaverdi,* God-has-given.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Name the cities where Paul and Barnabas have thus far preached since leaving Antioch in Syria. Where and under what circumstances did they turn from the Jews to the Gentiles?

Paul and Barnabas at Iconium

At Antioch of Pisidia a great crisis occurred in Paul's missionary labors. There he was led to see, and openly to proclaim, that his special mission was to the Gentiles. After a period of successful work a riot ensued, as we learned last week, and he and Barnabas were expelled from the city. They went on to Iconium. Here Paul spoke first in the synagogue, and many, both of the Jews and the Gentiles, believed his message. Then through the efforts of hostile Jews, the city was divided, part of the people holding with them, and part believing the apostles. Learning that Gentiles and Jews and rulers had conspired against them and purposed stoning them to death, they fled to Lystra.

"In Pisidian Antioch," writes Professor Ramsay, "the expulsion was produced by magisterial action; in Iconium it was brought about by mob violence, for it may be assumed that the attempt at stoning the apostles came from the lower classes under Jewish instigation. One sees how well the difference corresponds to the contrasted characters of the two cities, one governed by a Roman aristocracy, the other by a Hellenic body of citizens."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and *Derbe* were all cities of Galatia, the Roman province which extended from north to south across the great central plateau of Asia Minor; the two former were in the district of Phrygia, and the two latter in the district of Lycaonia. Lycaonia means "The Land of the Wolves"; the plain was wild and dreary.

Iconium (now Konieh) lay about ninety miles southeast of Pisidian Antioch and beyond the jurisdiction of the local authorities of Antioch; the journey would take Paul and Barnabas three or four days. Iconium was on a branch of the great Royal Road running between Antioch and Lystra.

Lystra, about eighteen miles southwest of Iconium, was a small garrison city at which the Royal Road ended. Like Antioch it was a Roman colony. In its population were a few Romans who formed the local aristocracy, and a few Greeks and Jews, but most of the inhabitants were comparatively barbarous subjects of Rome whose language was a dialect of their own. In the other cities traversed, Paul addressed people who had shared to some degree in Greek education.

Derbe lay isolated on the southeastern edge of the Lycaonian plain. The lofty snow-clad, conical peak of the Taurus Mountains eight thousand feet in height, kept guard above the city on the south.

Lycaonian Soldier
From a bas-relief of an ancient tomb in Lycaonia

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

One of the necessary preliminaries to deciding on a single aim in teaching this or any lesson we know lies in determining what is the leading spiritual truth contained in the Scripture passage. Acts 14 provides an unusually interesting problem in such a process; its main teaching may not seem to be on the surface. You may agree, in substance, with the Intermediate pupil who remarked of it: "Why, it teaches that we ought to stick to a thing till we get it done; Paul did, and Mark didn't." Or, you may find another, or a third, principal teaching.

Perhaps this sentence will appeal forcibly to you: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." Would you express that in this manner, "The true way to serve Christ is to do our full duty, however hard it may be"? Or in this way, "Faithfulness to Christ involves both hardship and happiness"? Or, simply thus, "Christian endurance leads to Christian power"? Note, at any rate, that Paul himself was faithful in spite of persecution, and that he seemed to be a still stronger Christian when he was going back to Pisidian Antioch than when he first went toward it. "The places of suffering are the places of power."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL UNMOVED BY FLATTERY AND DANGER

Beginning the Lesson

Does it occur to anyone that we have a rather surprising topic before us? "Paul Unmoved by Flattery"—why raise the question? That such a thing as danger, the peril of stoning, the fear of death, might move even a Paul, does not greatly surprise us—but flattery! It is a suggestion that seems almost ludicrously inept, when speaking of the stalwart missionary to the Gentiles. But Paul lived in a land and time different from ours. Flattery even today forms the stock in trade, the daily essential, in oriental business and social relations—and fine and noble men and women in the East are still being swayed by it. Moreover, in Paul's day flattery, working through the offering of worship to a person as a very god, was not at all uncommon nor always frowned upon.

But even nowadays is flattery unknown or always happily unsuccessful among us? The definition of the word in the dictionary hints at its insidious, potential appeal to almost any one of us. "To flatter" means, "to attempt to gratify the self-love or vanity, especially by artful and interested commendation or attention," "to please by compliments." The very word flattery is said to come from the word "flat," which seems once to have included this among its meanings: "to smooth down, to caress with the flat hand"; is it not a graphic way of expressing the calming, pacifying, falsely strengthening effect of insinuating but well disguised flattery? Are we proof against it? Was Paul?

A Recent Event

At this writing Mussolini has just returned from a visit to Perugia, where the populace cried, *Venite adoremus* (Come, let us adore), and an Italian newspaper printed the following:

"Venite adoremus. Come, O Black Shirts from Umbria, from the country so green and fertile, from all the villages vibrating with Fascist faith. Come in your cars or on foot, with your Roman ensigns, your flags, to Perugia, where Benito Mussolini will be! You must see him. You need again to impress on your mind his robust face, flowing with will and energy. Thus all will refill their souls with strength and health. *Venite adoremus.* Let us adore him; if we adore our mother we may adore him. *Venite adoremus!* When Jesus of Nazareth walked in the country of Galilee, when Napoleon Bonaparte returned to France from the island of Elba, when—thus histories will put it some day in the future—when Benito Mussolini came to Perugia the second time."

Would Mussolini refuse the sacrifice before the gates?

Men Who Have Wished to Be Worshiped

The Roman Empire deified and worshiped its emperors. In 29 A. D. Augustus Cæsar allowed the diets of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples and show divine honor to him. Soon all the chief cities had their Cæsareum and their emperor's festival. In the time of Tiberius one of the reasons given for depriving the city of Cyziars in Asia of its position as a free city was that it had failed to erect a temple to the god Augustus. When Caligula became emperor in 37 A. D., the Romans inscribed his name on a shield of gold and appointed a day on which priests and senators and their noblest young men and maidens should annually carry it to the Capitol with pæans and prayers. Caligula ordered the statues of the gods replaced by statues of himself, and in the temple dedicated to him he placed a golden image of himself, which by his orders was robed each day in garments similar to those he himself wore. Before this image the people fell down and worshiped.

Herod Agrippa of Judea desired to receive divine honors like the Roman emperors. Josephus says of him: "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cæsarea, and there he exhibited shows in honor of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity throughout his province. On the second day of the show, he put on a garment of silver tissue and of a texture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning. The silver of his garment, being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. Presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god, and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery."

This is the Herod who sought to have his statue placed in the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem, and to whom, as you know, the people one day shouted as he sat on his throne, "the voice of a god and not of a man," and immediately an angel of the Lord smote him (Acts 12.23).

The Truly Great Are Truly Humble

It was in an era like this, when everywhere worship was being paid to mortals, that the simple people of Lystra took Paul and Barnabas to be deities and sought to offer sacrifice to them. Do you suppose it was any temptation to these men? They were Christ's witnesses, and they could accept no impious worship. They

were men of like nature with these people, come only to bring them their good tidings.

When a great Roman general returned from his victories and was given a brilliant triumphal march through the streets of his native city, a slave walked at his side and every now and then whispered in his ear, "Remember that thou, too, art a man!" No such warning needed Paul, for he, knowing to whom his victories were due, was ever ready to say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Through Many Tribulations We Must Enter into the Kingdom of God

Neither Luke, the historian of The Acts, nor the apostles themselves made much of the persecutions and hardships endured by the followers of Christ. Had he not told them that they must suffer? "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God," said Paul on his return journey, in his exhortation to the disciples in the cities he had founded.

This word *tribulations* carries in itself a rich lesson. It is derived from the Latin word *tribulum,* which means *threshing-sledge.* Underneath the threshing sledge were sharp teeth of iron or rock, and when it was drawn over the grain by oxen these teeth bruised and broke into pieces the straw and chaff, and separated from them the wheat. As the threshing-sledge performed a good service for the wheat, so tribulations rightly borne will do much for human nature. "We rejoice in our tribulations," said Paul in his letter to the Romans, "knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope."

Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. "We so often complain of Providence because we forget its design," says a great English preacher. "Does God rule the world to the end of making us rich, great, or happy? Were this the objective, the course of the divine government would present, indeed, a series of sad blunders. But the goal of life is not personal enjoyment, social distinction, or material aggrandizement; it is a moral discipline, it designs the sanctification of our spirit, it is that we should be fit for the presence, joy and service of the holy God. Could we understand the relation of each painful event to our spiritual perfecting, we should talk less of the imperfections of his government."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Reasons for Paul's following a roundabout route from Lystra back to Syrian Antioch. See pages 346-355 of The Acts of the Apostles, by G. Campbell Morgan.

2. Paul's conception of what constitutes a Christian church. See chapter entitled The Church in Paul of Tarsus, by T. R. Glover.

3. Paul's methods; meeting pagans on common ground; revisiting churches to strengthen them. The importance of making our missions self-governing and self-sustaining.

4. Iconium and Lystra. See Chapter VI of Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul; Chapters IV, V, and VI of Ramsay's Cities of St. Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. To what does Peter refer in verse 7? 2. How was he obliged to justify his work among the Gentiles before his brethren in the church at Jerusalem? 3. What does Paul say in Galatians 2.1-18 about the conference at Jerusalem? 4. How did the decision of the Council show wisdom? 5. In what way can we see that this decision was by the Holy Spirit? 6. What would have been the result if the Council had upheld the men who made the trouble at Antioch? 7. Why was John Huss burned at the stake, Savonarola hanged in the public square of Florence, Latimer and Ridley in Oxford? 8. May others be good Christians who do not hold to all the doctrines that you hold?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE HEROISM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson

Have you seen blazing in the sky the great planet Jupiter—greatest of all the worlds that circle round the sun? And Jupiter was the name of the greatest god the Romans knew. Sometimes they called him Zeus, and put his statue by city gates that he might protect the city. Sometimes they built him a splendid temple, with fields about it where white oxen fed. On feast days they would hang garlands of mari-

golds round the neck of the oxen, and sacrifice to Jupiter; they hoped to win his favor by gifts—not by goodness. There was also another god who always had his share when Jupiter was worshiped. That was Mercury (or Hermes)—the swift messenger of the gods. Have you seen a statue of him with wings on his heels? He is supposed to be always ready—swift of heel and swift of tongue.

You can imagine what stories of the gods grew up in places where they were worshiped. Here is one:

Near Iconium lived old Philemon and Baucis, his wife. As they sat in their hut, weaving and singing, two strangers passed that way—one stately and silent, the other quick and merry and young. At the hut door they stopped and said, "We are weary travelers, and crave your hospitality." Then Baucis hasted and baked a cake and drew fresh water that they might bathe their feet. And as one drew off his sandal, lo, she saw a little wing! And as she and Philemon bowed low before the god-visitors, they vanished away!"—Emily Huntley.

It was at this same Iconium that the people tried to worship our missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, as Jupiter and Mercury. What is the story?

A Recent Experience at Lystra

In his book entitled In the Footsteps of St. Paul, Dr. Francis E. Clarke has an interesting account of his visit to Khatun Serai, the modern Lystra. "We found the inhabitants still less hospitable than in Paul's time," he writes. "Doubtless a stranger in these days is a far greater rarity than in ancient times. Prying faces were thrust behind the curtains of our *arabas* (wagons) to look at the strange women from America, with their unveiled faces. The *mudir,* or head man, of the hamlet was among the first arrivals in the motley crowd that surrounded the *arabas.* In return to a polite request that he would direct us to the ruins of the ancient city, he gave a prompt and curt refusal. The boys and young men, taking their cue from the head man, began to revile us as *'Giaours'* or 'Christian dogs.' But soon they found out that one of our company was a missionary doctor; then their whole attitude changed, for there were many diseased people in the little village, and to them the coming of a skilled physician from America, whose fame had already spread to this little hamlet, gave promise of health and life. This sudden change, gratifying as it was to the cold and weary travelers, showed that the character of the Lystrians for fickleness had not changed with the changing centuries."

The Heroism of Paul and Barnabas

Again and again we shall see how heroic were these first missionaries of the Christian Church. When the average Christian is asked to name the most vivid trait of Paul's character, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson says his answer, nine times out of ten, is "Courage."

Paul is universally recognized as above all others the hero of the New Testament. Art has always loved to picture him with a sword. The sword is the symbol of his life and the emblem of his career. Through the centuries, he has been the inspirer of crusaders and reformers and all who have contended mightily for the right.

The illustrations of Paul's courage are usually found in his experiences among bandits in mountain passes, his behavior when face to face with mobs in Lystra and Ephesus and Jerusalem, and his conduct in time of shipwreck when on his way to Rome.

"But his courage is shown far more in his preaching the cross. No devout Jew could hear a man call the Crucified Jesus the Messiah without being driven to fierce indignation and ungovernable rage. But this was Paul's message. Jesus had been crucified, and Jesus was the Messiah. He preached it in every synagogue into which he could gain admission. When they put him out of the synagogue, he preached it in a private house. When no private house was available, he preached it in the street. He preached it everywhere. When he was driven out of one city, he went on to the next and preached it there. When cast out of that city he fled to another and continued his preaching. He stirred up riots but kept on preaching. He kindled fires which threatened to burn him up, but he never changed his message. He was pursued by blood-thirsty mobs, but when he got a chance, he turned and began preaching to the mob. Wherever he went, he was feared and hated and cursed for his preaching, but he was Paul the dauntless, and he went onward along his unflinching way."

The Heroism of Pioneer Missionaries

"Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," the

Council at Jerusalem called Paul and Barnabas. Their successors have been legion. There is no history so thrilling, so full of adventure, containing so many examples of heroism and zeal, as the history of pioneer missionaries in distant lands and in the once wild frontier regions of our own land.

Have you read the biography of Robert Moffat? And do you recall that scene where the South African chief with a dozen men stood holding aloft poisoned spears, about to plunge them into his body? He had been repairing his wagon, and his wife stood by when the men came upon him. Dropping his tools and baring his breast, the great missionary calmly said: "Your threats are vain. We have come to bless you, and here we stay. If you are bound to be rid of us, do what you will. But our hearts are with you and we shall stay with you till we are killed. Now spear me, if you will, and when you have slain me, others like me will come to take up the work." The spears dropped as the chief said to his men, "These missionaries are so fearless of death, they must have ten lives: there must be another life beyond." The spirit of Robert Moffat is the spirit that has animated all true-hearted missionaries. They have hazarded and spent their lives for the people among whom they have worked.

Headed for Adventure

You're headed straight for adventure when you undertake to live a fine, strong, heroic life. The dictionary defines the verb *adventure* "to risk, to hazard, to put to the test." There's no fun in doing a thing that you know perfectly well you can do—unless you are a moral tenderfoot. You love to dream about doing something brave and heroic, just because it is brave and heroic, not for the reward. And you'll find that it is going to take all that there is in you to live a clean, strong, Christian life. That's where the adventure comes in.

The world cannot be, at the same time, easy and heroic. Let us suppose a case. Here is a child on the railroad track. The engineer does not see him. At the risk of your life you snatch that child from danger. You are a hero. You have adventured. You have put your courage to the test. But if you had known, when you made the rescue, that there was not a particle of danger, that the engineer saw the child and meant to stop just in time, what would there have been heroic about your deed? Wouldn't it have been cheap and commonplace?

The annual round-up at Cheyenne, Wyoming, is famous for its daring riders. For several years a mere boy only ten when he began thrilled the spectators with what looked like very dangerous feats of horsemanship. "The boy is not in a particle of danger," the father confided to a friend. "That horse is so carefully trained that he will buck at a word, or stand still at another word. He would no more hurt the boy than I would." It was a "fake" performance.

We'll say you are in a group of gay young people. They are good friends. You like them. They like you. But they want to do something questionable, something you cannot approve of. If you knew there would be no danger of risking your popularity with this group that you like, and that you want to like you, what would there be fine in opposing this questionable thing?

God is always very eager to make heroes of us. That's why he says: "I can't cheapen virtue by making it easy. I am not going to pay you in the gewgaws and gimcracks of life for living finely and bravely. I am going to make it a real adventure. You'll have to risk something to win character."

But that's the joy of it, the thrill of it. There is nothing commonplace about living finely and bravely.—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

Not in the clamor of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat.—Longfellow.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small"—too small to be worth talking about, for the day of adversity is its first real opportunity.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What individual Gentiles has The Book of Acts recorded as having been baptized as Christians? 2. How did Peter learn that God made no distinction between Gentiles and Jews? (Acts 10.) 3. What Gentile church has Paul founded? 4. What is a good way to settle disputes? 5. Why did the Pilgrim Fathers come to America?

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8.36

LESSON Acts 15.1-35; Galatians 5.1-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 133

ACTS 15.1 And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying,* Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. TROUBLE-MAKERS FROM JERUSALEM, verse 1. Jewish synagogues were composed of Jews and proselytes, the latter being Gentiles who had received the Jewish rite of circumcision. Other Gentiles who attended the synagogue services were called "God-fearing" or "devout," but were not in "full fellowship" with the rest because they had not been circumcised. We have seen how Paul and Barnabas preached to the Gentiles and founded flourishing churches among them at Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, Iconium and Derbe on his first missionary journey, and how he reported to the church at Antioch of Syria, the church which had sent them on their mission, that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." The church at Antioch, itself composed largely of Gentiles, rejoiced over the good news, and did not realize the far-reaching effect of this new departure. When the report reached the church at Jerusalem, however, it was not so welcome. In fact, it aroused violent opposition. "Certain members" of that church, upon their own responsibility, went from Jerusalem to Antioch and declared there that Gentiles must first become Jewish proselytes before they could become Christians—must be "circumcised after the custom of Moses" in order to be "saved."

For their stand there is much to be said. The rite had been observed since the days of Abraham, and no law abrogating it had been voiced. Who had authority to declare it unnecessary? What right had Paul to adopt his revolutionary procedure and say that "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing"? Paul had the right of a revelation from God, a revelation shown, not by vision nor by word of prophet, but by results which proved God's will and purpose. God had borne the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as he did unto the Jews; and he had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleansing their hearts by faith. God's will is shown in his ways with men as well as through his words to men.

"The Jews of the first century eschew the Gentiles, but we of the twentieth century eschew the Jews. They were wrong, and so are we" (George W. McDaniel).

II. A COMMITTEE SENT TO JERUSALEM, verses 2, 3. The visiting Jews aroused much discussion and dissension in the church at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas opposed them vigorously. Finally it was decided to send a deputation to Jerusalem and settle the vexed question with the apostles and elders there. Naturally, Paul and Barnabas were appointed among the delegates.

They started out happily, being escorted some little distance by fellow-members of

the church, and journeyed southward through Phœnicia and Samaria. Everywhere they brought joy to the hearts of "the brethren" as they declared that the Gentiles were accepting Christ as their Savior.

III. FOR AND AGAINST CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, verses 4-21. When the delegates arrived at Jerusalem they were honorably received by the whole church. They gave an account of what had taken place in the newly founded Gentile churches. Then certain Pharisees arose and said, "It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."

So great a matter, which involved the question whether the gospel was for all the Gentiles or only for the few who should first become Jews, could not be settled offhand. A meeting of apostles and elders was called to consider the question. After considerable discussion, Peter rose up and said, "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe." He was referring to the time not long after the conversion of Paul when he had gone down to Joppa and had had there his vision on the housetop and then had gone home with the Gentile Cornelius and after preaching to him and his household had baptized them; for, as he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." Peter had had to justify his conduct to the other brethren at Jerusalem, and when they heard the circumstances they had glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

Peter recalled all this to the minds of his fellow-workers, and said, "God makes no distinction between them and us, giving them also the witness of the Holy Spirit, and wherefore should we put a yoke upon their necks which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Every one of us who is honest knows that he has not really obeyed the whole Mosaic law. We believe that we, like them, shall be saved, not by the rite of circumcision, but through the grace of the Lord Jesus."

Silence reigned in the assembly, and then Paul and Barnabas rehearsed signs and wonders that God had wrought among the Gentiles through them. "He just painted for them the picture of how Sergius Paulus in Cyprus, the Greeks and Romans in the great cities on the plateau (of Asia Minor) had, through their preaching about Christ, actually and truly received the Holy Spirit. There it was—a living flaming fact that God had, through Christ, given his Spirit to uncircumcised foreigners. They might argue that the whole law of Moses was against it, but there stood the Fact which they could not gainsay. God was free to do what he would in his own world; and this was what he had done" (Basil Mathews).

> "Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes
> Error a fault, the truth discourtesy" (George Herbert).

Then James, the brother of Jesus, offered a definite proposal, which was in the nature of a compromise. "Peter has told you that God has given the gospel to the Gentiles. This has been foretold by prophecy," he said, as he turned to Amos 9.11, 12 to prove that Judaism was fulfilled in Christianity. "Therefore my judgment is," he declared, "that we should not trouble those Gentiles who turn to God, but ask them only to abstain from four things: from eating food that has been polluted by first having been offered to idols, from eating meat which has not been strained from its blood, from things strangled, and from impurity. From these things they should abstain because of the feeling of the Jews who are found in every city." The concession as to food was a reasonable one for those times; the conditions imposed rendered it possible for Jews and Gentiles to live together in harmony.

At this conference there was free expression of thought, but none of bitterness of feeling. The main point at issue was decided on its merits. Would that controversial questions in churches today were discussed as sanely and settled as wisely as this one of the early church!

IV. THE FAVORABLE DECISION, verses 22-29. The advice of James carried the day. It was agreed that two leading men of the Church of Jerusalem, Judas and Silas (who later became a great friend and companion of Paul), should return with Paul to Antioch to explain their decision. A letter was sent also in which the Gentiles were greeted as brethren, informed that those from Jerusalem who had

stirred up the trouble had not been acting by the authority of the church, commended Paul and Barnabas as beloved brethren who had hazarded their lives for the Lord, and reported the unanimous decision, given through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that no further burden should be placed on Gentile Christians than the abstaining from the four things enumerated by James. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things," the letter reads. "The Lord had promised his own presence where two or three were gathered together to bind or to loose, and also the presence of his Spirit to be the guide of the church, when the ways appeared to diverge. Accordingly, in this unanimous decision they recognized the mind of the Holy Spirit; for oneness of heart and of mind was a special sign of his working" (Rackham).

"Paul proclaimed to all generations that religion is not ceremonialism, but a matter of the heart. A man is a Christian when he becomes a new creation in Christ, and as soon as he becomes a new creation in Christ, he is free. Only a man of enormous strength could have won this victory for mankind. It made Christianity the universal and final religion" (C. E. Jefferson).

V. THE FAVORABLE RECEPTION OF THE DECISION, verses 30-35. Well knowing, as they did, the strong, conservative element in the church at Jerusalem, not to say the bigotry of many of its members, the church at Antioch must have awaited the result of the conference with considerable anxiety. There was great rejoicing when the committee returned and the letter was read. The church at Jerusalem had yielded in what seemed to them a most important matter, the requirement of circumcision; the church at Antioch readily agreed, on their part, to abstain from things strangled and from food offered to idols. There was give and take on both sides.

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

Judas and Silas, after exhorting the church, returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch for some time, preaching and teaching the word of the Lord.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, verse 19. The Gentiles slew animals in sacrifice to their idols and then sold the flesh; to eat such flesh was to the Jews to share in the heathen sacrifice.

The blood was to the Jews the life, and therefore sacred as God's gift; moreover, by it sins were to be taken away, and therefore it became a sacred emblem. "When animals are killed for food," writes a native of Palestine, "the main artery in the neck must be severed, and the blood thoroughly drained, for no blood must ever enter into any food whatsoever."

The "necessary things" stated by the Council are four in number. The followers of Mohammed in Palestine have directions given them in their laws as to what they must do in sixteen hundred different cases!

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Where were Gentiles first received in large numbers into the Christian Church? How was Paul led to turn from the Jews to the Gentiles on his first missionary journey? In what cities did he found Gentile churches? On his return what did he tell the church at Antioch about the Gentile churches?

The Conference with "the Pillars of the Church"

That Paul's account in Galatians 2.1-10 is of his visit to Jerusalem at this time, is the usual view. Titus, a Gentile convert, was with Paul and Barnabas, and before the general conference told about in our text these three held consultation with "the Three Pillars of the Church," James and Peter and John. At this smaller conference the three acknowledged Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles and gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, agreeing, we may say, to divide the mission field, Paul and Barnabas to be supreme where the Gentiles predominated, and the other apostles to be supreme among the Jews. The only thing the three

asked of Paul was that the Gentile Christians should remember the poor Christians of Jerusalem.

Continued Struggle with the Judaizers

After this Council in Jerusalem the circumcision party renewed their efforts with greater zeal. Luke is right, however, in speaking of peace, because the struggle changed its character. "The extreme party in its fanaticism became almost a separate 'sect' of 'Judaizers'; and their work was transformed into a personal attack on Paul. They recognized that 'the apostle of the Gentiles' was the great champion of Gentile liberty; and accordingly they dogged his footsteps, they disputed his teaching, they denied his apostolate. They sent emissaries even into his own Gentile churches to steal his converts away from him, and in many places they succeeded in stirring up scenes of strife such as had occurred at Antioch, and this with most disastrous effect in the churches of Galatia, which almost apostatized from Paul's gospel. We learn these facts chiefly from the letters of the third missionary journey—to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. This last, however, written in 54, marks the turn of the tide. It was Paul's great vindication of his gospel; after that, we only find some last flames, as it were, flashing up in the Epistle to the Philippians, and the dying embers of the controversy in the Pastoral Epistles. But in attacking Paul the Judaizers were not alone. If they were zealous against Paul because of circumcision, the unbelieving Jews who would not even accept Jesus as the Messiah must have been infuriated at his preaching to the Gentiles. Accordingly, as we shall see, they pursued him with a relentless hatred. This controversy with the Jews altogether eclipsed in magnitude that with the Judaizers; and of the latter Luke tells us no more. Indeed, he had no reason to break silence. The controversy was personally most painful to Paul; but in the council at Jerusalem the church had definitely decided against the Judaizing party and the truth must prevail. The rapid growth of the Gentile churches of itself caused the controversy to die out, and there was no need to rake up the embers."

The Oldest Portraits of Peter and Paul

The Passing of Jewish Christianity

In the year 70 Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the temple burned, and the city, excepting a few towers and parts of the walls, razed to the ground. Some years before this James, the Christian leader, had been put to death, on charges which are obscure to us, by the Sadducean authorities. Not long after that the usual conditions of turbulence in Palestine were greatly aggravated; Jerusalem soon became a horrible scene of bloody partisan strife and mob violence; and at last the Christians —how many in number we know not—withdrew from the Holy City, fled across the Jordan, and took up their residence in the Gentile town of Pella. Without a center, without any important general organization, without any great leader, Jewish Christianity as a distinctive power in the Christian Church came to an end. There continued to be Christians in Palestine. Some of these, like Hegesippus in the second century, entered wholly into sympathy with general church thought. Others maintained their natural character and were more or less known to Christian writers as Nazarene or Ebionite Christians. Cut off from the main Church, and treated as heretics, they gradually disappear from view. It seems almost like irony when about 150 A. D., eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr actually apologizes for his own liberality in holding that some Christians who observe the institutions of Judaism can be saved. It marks the complete reduction of specific Jewish Christianity to the position of a half-tolerated sect.—James Hardy Ropes, in The Apostolic Age.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The delegates to the conference at Jerusalem were escorted on their way by other Christians, perhaps as far as Seleucia on the coast. They went through Phœnicia and Samaria, we are told, Phœnicia being the strip of coast land south of Syria and Samaria the central of the three provinces of Palestine west of the Jordan. Probably they passed through the cities of Sidon and Tyre and Ptolemais, turned eastward at the last place and crossed the Plain of Esdraelon into Samaria, then went south to Jerusalem.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Never has there been a greater opportunity for missionary work and never a greater need for open-minded, forward looking devotional missionaries. But it is time to "re-think" the missionary enterprise and put it afresh before our students. Remind them of the increasing "smallness" of the world; show how closely we are bound together socially, economically, geographically. Then by a sympathetic discussion of the quest for God that has gone on in all lands, bring them to a knowledge of the value of other religions and other faiths. By skilful questions about our civilization and its effects and defects, you may help your students to realize that the object of missionary effort should be to preach, not one form of Christianity, but Christ. Then they may see the value and importance of sharing our experience with others in missionary work, and may also see that the churches overseas should be left to settle their own problems and develop into independent churches.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL STANDS FOR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Beginning the Lesson

Feeling was intense at the Council in Jerusalem. Certain members of the Jerusalem church saw the revolutionary tendency of Paul's free gospel, honestly believed that all the Mosaic law must be lived up to, and felt that they were defending the faith of their fathers.

Paul and his party knew that the peaceful course of their work was at stake, believed that the Jewish rites were not necessary to salvation, and were firm in their determination to stand by a principle which meant so much in their work for God. How had the trouble come about?

The Struggle between Conservatives and Liberals in the Early Church

See Explanations and Comments and The Historical Background.

Truth Outgrows Old Forms of Expression

In this world of ours all our spiritual truths, all our eternal realities, have to be expressed in temporal, human, changing forms. There have been stagnant centuries which have kept unchanged the crystallized forms which they inherited, and they have supposed that faith would cease to be if this particular form of truth should vanish away. The Pharisee could not imagine a true religion without circumcision and the blood of bulls and goats; The Roman Catholic of the fifteenth century could not believe that real religion would survive if the doctrine of transubstantiation—the real presence in the bread and wine—should be given up. The Calvinist supposed that his articles of faith were a permanent embodiment of truth and his plan of salvation the only possible one.

They all conceived of truth as something which could be expressed once for all in a form which all coming ages must keep unchanged. As well might we expect to bottle up the daylight to preserve it. Truth is never some dead thing which can be "laid out"; it is living, moving, quickening, outgrowing its old forms, taking on new expressions and preserving itself, as life does, by endless variations and by infinite embodiments.

There are transitions going on in every age. The things that can be shaken are removed, and the things that have waxed old vanish away. These things always bring trial to faith, for it is difficult for most persons to distinguish between the temporary form—i.e., the human embodiment—and the eternal and abiding truth which lives on in the midst of change and vanishing forms.

Here comes the great test of spiritual power and insight. Those who have "short

vision" and a traditional faith build on the temporal, and cling to the form which has grown familiar and dear to them, but if anything shakes this, their faith is shattered, and they suffer shipwreck. Those, however, who have real spiritual vision look through the temporal and fleeting, through the transitory forms and embodiments, and settle their hearts and their faith upon the eternal reality—the Infinite Self who abides and works through all changes.—Rufus M. Jones, in Practical Christianity.

Later Controversies in the Christian Church

The whole history of the Church is a record of strife—and strife among brethren, rival factions, rival doctrines, rival systems of government. It is useless to recall the dead and buried controversies of the past centuries, but every student of Church History knows that not an item of the Creed was accepted by the Church without the fiercest quarrels and the keenest discussions—sometimes even to the drawing of the sword and the shedding of blood.

We have among ourselves evidences enough that violent strife and disputation can be caused by religion. Christian churches are divided on points of doctrine, and points of worship, and points of government; and even within the same church, as in the Church of England today, there are parties arrayed against each other about ritual, and even about the sacrament of the Lord's Supper itself, which is the one thing that ought to unite all Christians. Many of our churches were born in the throes of conflict and cradled in controversy. Men, following truth, constrained to speak truth, have had to live at variance with brethren whom they respected, but with whom they could not agree.

Lord Rosebery, in a very beautiful speech at Epsom, referred to a controversy in the English Church at the time about incense and lights in worship, and said: "Theological discussions are, for some reason unknown to the layman, conducted with more asperity than any other form of discussion. Why that should be so, why the gospel that came to preach peace and goodwill in this world should be so often the means of provoking the most violent disputations, is a problem I confess I am unable to solve."—Condensed from The Gift of Influence, by Hugh Black.

The Changing Emphasis in Missions

Paul's attitude in this struggle of the early church is very helpful to us in our missionary thinking. One of the most urgent problems facing us today as Christians is how to bring about satisfactory relationships between the orient and the occident, between colored and white. This can be done only on a basis of mutual respect. During recent years we have been made to realize how God's spirit has been working among every people and in every land. We have become conscious, too, of the fact that our western civilization is not the fruitage of the Christian life. Many educated men in the orient are actually repelled by western civilization as they see it. As a result of this, leading missionaries of today are presenting Jesus Christ as the center of the Christian religion, and have ceased to present the non-essential, so-called, Christian civilization.

The second change in outlook in missions centers about the vital question whether we are seeking to dominate the new Christian peoples, or whether we are willing to share our experience with them, put Jesus before them, and then leave them free to work out their own problems according to their own ideas and traditions.

Dr. Ernest Thomas has some pertinent questions for us: "Must we give them Western architecture for their buildings and so proclaim Jesus Christ as alien to their culture? Must we insist, in spite of Paul, that they must come to Christ through the Hebrew Scriptures rather than along the road by which God has led them? Must we insist that they interpret the work of Christ as meeting the needs of the ancient Jew or the Levantine Greek, or the Latin medievalist, or the Teutonic individualist, and refrain from expressing it in terms born of their own native quests and aspirations?

"Surely the reality about modern missionary work is that it demands revolutionary changes in our world outlook, in our conception of the purpose of God, in our sense of things to be valued and in our appreciation of what is vital and basic in the gospel. In other words, the new world demands of the home Church men and women whose minds have expanded with the growth of geographical knowledge and with inter-human intercourse. Granted this vital change in ourselves, the missionaries can go on with their tremendous undertaking. With a changing world there must be enriched minds and expanded souls. To retain old outlooks in the presence of transfigured facts is to organize life as a lie."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The passing of Jewish Christianity. See Chapter VII of Ramsay's Paul the Traveler.

2. How may Christian unity be attained?

3. Can fundamentalists and modernists live in harmony in the same church?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the primary object of the second missionary journey? 2. How may the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit have been manifested to Paul on his journey across Asia Minor? 3. Are hindrances guidance for us sometimes? 4. How was Livingstone hindered and led on his travels? 5. How have other missionaries been led? 6. Why was Paul's vision at Troas a natural one? 7. Who are our Macedonians? 8. What does the pronoun "we" in verse 10 indicate? 9. What famous battle occurred on the Plains of Philippi?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL OPPOSES RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES

Beginning the Lesson

"If two goats meet each other in a narrow path above a piece of water, what do they do? They cannot turn back, and they cannot pass each other; there is not an inch of spare room. If they were to butt at each other, both would fall into the water below and be drowned. What will they do, do you suppose?" Thus Martin Luther once questioned. What would you do? "Well, Nature has taught the one goat to lie down and let the other pass over it, and then they both get to the end of the way safe and sound."

We have come to a time in the history of Paul's work when trouble arose between the new church at Antioch and the old church at Jerusalem. Did they butt at each other and both go down in defeat, or did they yield each to the other and pass in safety? We shall see.

How the Trouble Arose

A cloud was coming upon the church at Antioch from the south. Men were walking over the hills from Jerusalem to Antioch. They were Christians, but they thought that Jesus had come simply to the Jews alone, as their own Messiah. The disciples of Jesus (they felt) formed just another party among the Jews. There were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and now the Nazarenes.

"We shall be swamped by foreigners!" was the cry they raised when they heard Paul's story of how a Roman ruler in Cyprus and the Greeks in Galatia had entered into the Way of Christ without obeying the Law of Moses.

"Keep out the alien—the Gentile," said these Christians who had come of Paul's old sect—the Pharisees. "Jesus was a Jew, and was circumcised (they argued); he preached to Jews, his disciples were all under the Law of Moses. Jesus came from God to the Chosen People, the Jews—and to them alone."

Then they flung down their challenge to Paul and to the Greeks in the church at Antioch. "Unless you are circumcised and so become Jews," they said, "after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

It came like the blow of an axe, cleaving the church in two. The Jews in the church were against Paul; while the Greeks, on the other side, were in alarm, because their whole position as Christians was denied.

With the brethren divided into two parties of Jews and Greeks, it was quite clear that this question must be settled once for all. And it must be settled at Jerusalem or it would all break out again, for Jerusalem was the center of the Jew Party.

Paul and Barnabas, with some of the others, were sent off by the Christians of Antioch to Jerusalem. As this little group of men with their cloaks and water-bottles and walking-staffs set out along the road, few people, except the Greek Christians who went out to cheer them, would know or care on what enterprise they were going. But, to those with eyes to see, this was, indeed, one of the great moments in history. Paul was starting out—as surely as any knight has ever done—to fight one of the great decisive battles of the world, almost alone.—Condensed from Paul the Dauntless, by Basil Mathews.

Continue with Explanations and Comments.

Taking the Opposite Side

An amusing story is related of Anthony Trollope, who, although a delightful man, was very much inclined to take the opposite side in a discussion. He was once sitting in a drawing room looking over a magazine when his attention was caught by the voice of a friend at a little distance. The friend stopped speaking, and Mr. Trollope, looking up, exclaimed: "I entirely disagree with you. What was it you were saying?" Without the least idea of the subject under consideration or the faintest notion of the sentiments expressed, his natural bent led him to declare himself promptly on the opposite side.

More frequently than they imagine, although not so brusquely, young people do the same thing. They listen to a statement, hear an opinion or catch the refrain of an anecdote, and through mere love of an argument take the negative side. There are usually two sides of an important question that may be taken, especially if the question be one of manners and customs. If it be one of ethics and of moral conclusions there may be but one side. In any event it is tne wiser way before getting into line of battle to know rather definitely for what one is fighting.

Taking the opposite side because one has a certain perversity of disposition or because one does not object to wordy strife is playing with fire. Once kindled, who knows where fire will stop?

The little breezes that ruffle the surface of home tranquillity are almost always found to come from the quarter of ill-timed argument. Even when one does not agree with what is said it may not be necessary to make an adverse comment or express a dissenting opinion. Sometimes one word brings on another and people find themselves heated and disturbed over trivialities about which they really care very little. An old, old woman past her ninetieth year was one day talking with a girl of fifteen. The latter was vehement and impulsive and seldom hesitated to express herself positively in conversation. "My dear," said the great-grandmother with a humorous twinkle in the dark eyes that had never lost their fire, "I was once very much like you. I learned after a while, as you will, that one does not need on every occasion to have the final word. One may continue to think as she pleases and to be silent when talk will bring on a quarrel."

If for any adequate reason one must speak strongly on the opposite side, it may be well to remember that one need not speak sharply, loudly or with too many adjectives. If the voice is governed and the tones are low and even, if the manner remains serene and no appearance of agitation betrays a feeling of anger or annoyance, there will be little danger of unhappy consequences. Let one party in an argument maintain coolness and composure, and not alone will that side gain an advantage, but the other will unconsciously be influenced in the direction of self-control. Every time that we give the reins to our temper and let it rush off with the bit between its teeth we lose something of our own dignity, our own habit of self-restraint and our ability to influence an opponent. Whoever is in the habit of talking on the opposite side, whether it be in a meeting where all have equal rights, in a Bible class, an evening club, or a talk at the breakfast table, should remember that it is the privilege of others to think differently and to state their reasons. Then, too, it should not be forgotten that one must not hastily interrupt another or snatch the word before his turn comes. Politeness requires reciprocity. The person who has the floor must be allowed to finish before the place is taken by a successor.

We should be on the alert to guard against bitterness and malice when engaged in a discussion. Irony is a weapon that should be sparingly used. While it may be pardonable to show the absurdity of that which is under discussion, it is never in good taste to hold an opponent up to ridicule. Personalities should be avoided. In searching for the weak point in the antagonist's armor, pains should be taken to say nothing about the antagonist's self.—Forward.

Sentence Sermons

"A little explained, a little endured, a little passed over, and the quarrel is cured."

"When one will not, two cannot, quarrel."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why is Barnabas not associated with Paul in this Second Missionary Journey? 2. Who was in the right about John Mark? 3. What did Paul say about his separation from Barnabas in 1 Cor. 9.6? 4. What became of Barnabas?

PAUL CARRIES THE GOSPEL INTO EUROPE

GOLDEN TEXT: Come over into Macedonia, and help us. Acts 16.9

LESSON Acts 15.36; 16.15

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 60.1-6

ACTS 16.9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE MACEDONIAN CALL, verses 9, 10. Paul was at Troas, the gateway to Europe. As he walked the streets he saw a motley crowd, among them many Europeans. As he stood in the harbor and gazed out at the distant islands fringing the coast of Macedonia, he must have longed to go over and possess that part of the world for Christ. It was a natural vision which appeared to Paul that night, of a man of Macedonia standing before him and begging him to "Come over into Macedonia and help us." "There was that mighty power which has been called 'the urge of God' acting upon a soul ready to obey the divine behest to the uttermost."

"How came the vision to take this shape—a man standing beseeching him? Perhaps because an active imagination tends always to personify human need. Phillips Brooks once confided to a friend that sometimes, as he preached in Trinity Church, the multitude of faces in the congregation, expressing their multitudinous hunger and yearning, would suddenly melt into a composite face, all the people becoming for the moment a single person whose vast need moved the preacher profoundly, and to whom he poured out his secret soul in impassioned utterance. It may have been thus with Paul and the Macedonians. His eager yearning to help would not permit him to think of them impersonally as a collection of individuals, but only as a composite personality whose need was so acute that a way must be found to help them. I think the success of the missionary enterprise always will depend upon the power of Christians to visualize and personalize the need of non-Christians in this way" (James A. Beebe).

"I am confident that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it" (Lincoln).

God was bidding him preach in Macedonia, Paul believed, and "straightway" he made his plans to obey his orders.

Very few old men, W. Robertson Nicoll thinks, look back with regret upon the decisions that they made at the crises of their careers, and the reason is, he says, that we are not left so much to our own wisdom as we think. All unconsciously to ourselves we have been guided.

Up to this point in The Acts Luke has been telling his narrative in the third person, but from now on the "we" appears and he speaks as an eyewitness. "Straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel unto them." Luke, the beloved physician, joined Paul at Troas, and with Timothy (see The Historical Background) and Silas was Paul's companion for the remainder of this missionary journey.

II. ON TO MACEDONIA, verses 11, 12. From Troas Paul's ship crossed directly to the island of Samothrace and on the following day reached Neapolis, in Macedonia. Follow his trip on the map. From there Paul and his company went nine miles inland to Philippi. This city was a Roman colony and claimed the distinction of

being "the first of the district." We know that there was great rivalry among cities for that title. Professor Ramsay says that "Amphipolis was ranked first by general consent, and Philippi first by its own consent." He finds that every city which could pretend to the first place in respect of any qualification whatsoever called itself "first," and aroused the jealousy of other cities that counted themselves equally prominent (a state of affairs not lacking in modern countries!). Smyrna was "first of Asia in size and beauty"; Ephesus, first of Asia as the landing-place of every Roman official; Pergamos, first as the official capital; and on one of its coins Sardis boldly styled itself "first metropolis of Asia, of Lydia, of Hellenism"!

"No one could have guessed that this little advance guard represented a greater kingdom than that which Xerxes represented when he invaded Europe, though he brought together the armies of forty-six nations to contend against Greece, constructed a canal for his ships to ride upon, and flung a bridge across the Hellespont, over which his soldiers marched incessantly for seven days and nights. The picture of the magnificent Xerxes seated on his throne of gold watching the tremendous disaster of the battle of Salamis, fades away with the years; so, also, does the glory of the victories of the Roman Augustus; but the King whom Paul came to Europe to herald forth rises still to greater and greater power."

III. THE FIRST CONVERT IN EUROPE, verses 13-15. Evidently there was no synagogue in Philippi, or Paul would have gone there on the Sabbath. Learning that there was a place of prayer by the riverside, beyond the city gates, he went there and found a company of women, among them Lydia, a prosperous merchant from Thyatira, who dealt in purple-dyed garments. She was a Jewish proselyte, for "she worshiped God." Paul gave his message to these women, and the Lord "opened her heart to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

"We are told sometimes today that the church is full of women; that there are no men going to church. I contradict the statement whenever I hear it made. But the measure in which it is true is the condemnation of men; and let the men who are becoming Christless and churchless lament if the hour ever should come when the women cease to worship" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Lydia and all her household were baptized, for they believed the good news brought to them by Paul. She besought the missionaries to make her house their headquarters, and this they did. Hospitality was always a marked characteristic of the early church: 1 Pet. 4.9; Rom. 19.3; 1 Tim. 5.10; 3 John 5.

"The Macedonians must have found the gospel very precious which came to them in answer to a need they did not know themselves. And so your needs have stood, are standing now, before God. They have moved him to deep pity and care for you. And he has sent the supply for them before you knew and wanted it. And here it is—a God to worship, a Savior to believe in, a Comforter to rest upon" (Phillips Brooks).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

By a riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, verse 13. When there was no synagogue the Jews generally preferred to say their prayers by the water-side, whether of sea or river, for this afforded opportunity for their ablutions; compare 21.5 and Ezra 8.15-21. Josephus quotes a decree of Halicarnassus allowing the Jews to make their prayers on the seashore according to the custom of their fathers; and two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still mentions *oratione litorales* (prayers on the shore) as a characteristic of the Jews.—R. B. Rackham.

Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, verse 14. Thyatira, like the Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. Lydia sold the purple-dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi, and Professor Ramsay thinks it probable that she had a regular connection with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was. "Lydia, of course, sold also the less expensive kinds of garments; but she takes her trade-name from the finest class of her wares, indicating that she was a first-class dealer. She must have possessed a considerable amount of capital to trade in such articles. As her husband is not mentioned, and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she

may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and Macedonia."

A Group of Korean Women Holding a Prayer-Meeting by a Riverside

Purple, verse 14. The purple dye was obtained from a secretion of two mollusca, the purpura and the murex. The ancients had, of course, no mineral dyes, and this therefore was the only really firm dye which they possessed, and it is often contrasted, in the poets and elsewhere, with the treacherous dyes obtained from the herbs. However, the word *purple* was loosely applied to all the colors which the creatures produced, from deep red to violet, and was regarded throughout antiquity as a great luxury and mark of distinction. The dye was first discovered by the Phœnicians, whose god Merkart (so the story went) noticed one day that his dog had got his nose red by poking about among the shells. The Greeks learned about the dye from the Phœnicians, but the knowledge was totally lost during the Dark Ages. It was rediscovered in 1859 by a French investigator, who traced some violet stains on Minorca fishermen's clothes.—A. E. Zimmerman, in The Greek Commonwealth.

She was baptized, and her household, verse 15. This was due to the great power of the parent or head of the house over his family or household. This authority was a relic of the patriarchal stage of early civilization, and from this we can see that the *"patria potestas"* was still a living reality not only at Rome but throughout the ancient world. Almost as a matter of course the father set the religion for his family of children and servants.—R. B. Rackham.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What was Paul's question when on the way to Damascus he recognized Jesus as his Lord? Who started out with Paul on his first missionary journey? Who went all the way with him?

The Second Missionary Journey Planned, 15.36-39

After the conference at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas remained some time in Antioch of Syria. Then Paul's missionary zeal urged him onward, and he proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the cities where they had preached on their first journey. Barnabas was nothing loth, but he wished John Mark to accompany them. Paul objected, for on that former journey Mark had deserted them at Perga. Barnabas wished to give Mark a second chance and insisted that he accompany them. Paul would not yield, and they agreed to separate. With Mark, Barnabas went southwestward to Cyprus, and this is the last that we hear about him, though tradition says he was very successful as a missionary.

Paul Starts on his Second Missionary Journey with Silas, 15.40 to 16.5.

Paul took Silas as his companion and went northward through Syria and then westward to Tarsus, his old home in Cilicia. Thence they crossed the Taurus mountains through the pass known as the Cilician Gates, and came to Derbe and then to Lystra. At Lystra Paul chose Timothy to be his attendant also. Strenuously as Paul had objected to a Jewish rite being made the condition of salvation for the Gentiles, he had no objections to Jews themselves observing all their customs, and he had Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess though his father was a Greek, circumcised in order to satisfy the Jews.

As Paul went on his way he reported to the churches the decision of the Council at Jerusalem. The churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased rapidly in numbers.

The date of the Second Missionary Journey was 49 to 52 A. D.

Frustrated Purposes, 16.6-8

The missionaries traveled westward, but either by a vision or an inward impression Paul felt "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." When they reached the borders of Mysia, Paul wished to turn northward into Bithynia, the province on the Black Sea, but again the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of Jesus, suffered them not." Wisely John Newton observes that what to others are disappointments, are to believers intimations of the way and will of God. Still headed westward they crossed the district of Mysia ("passing it by" in the sense that they did not stop to preach on the way), and came to the city of Troas on the Ægean Sea.

Coin of Troas

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Follow Paul's Second Missionary Journey from Antioch in Syria to Troas in the district of Mysia, Asia Minor, by means of the dotted lines on this accompanying sketch map. From Antioch to Tarsus, over the Tarsus Mountains to Derbe and on to Lystra and Iconium, in all this Paul was covering familiar ground. From Iconium he traversed South Galatia and crossed the province of Asia to Troas on the seacoast.

[According to one view, the words "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" mean that they turned northeastward and went as far as Ancyra and Tavium in Northern Galatia, where Paul founded the churches to which he wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. The dotted lines on the map indicate this route. Weeks or months would have been required for such a work, and as Luke does not mention it, most scholars prefer the "South Galatian view."]

Asia was the Roman province by that name which included the three districts of Mysia, Lydia and Caria along the Ægean Sea. When Paul reached Asia and felt forbidden to preach in that province, he started northward, intending to enter the

province of Bithynia, which extended along the southern shore of the Black Sea. Then his plans were again changed, and he crossed Mysia to Troas on the Ægean.

It took Paul two days to sail from Troas to the island of Samothrace and then on to Neapolis on the coast of the Roman Province of *Macedonia.* Kavalla is the modern name of Neapolis. It has a beautiful harbor, and fine arches remain of the Roman acqueduct of Paul's day.

Coin of Neapolis

Philippi, to which Paul hastened, lay on the great marble-paved Egnatian Road which united Italy across Greece with Asia. It was founded by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, whence its name. In Julius Cæsar, Shakespeare has immortalized the Plains of Philippi, where ninety years before Paul's time (48 B. C.) Brutus and Cassius fought with Octavius and Mark Antony for the liberty of the world and were defeated. Here the Roman Empire had its rise with Augustus Cæsar (Octavius) as its first Emperor. In honor of the victory the city of Philippi was made a Roman colony with the full title of *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensi.* A colony was really a bit of Rome on foreign soil; its people had all the privileges of Roman citizenship.

Only a few Turkish huts and the ruins of two gateways supposed to date from the time of the Emperor Claudius mark the site of the Philippi that Paul knew.

Thyatira, the city whence Lydia came, was in the province of Asia, half-way between the Hermus and Caicus rivers. It seems to have had more trade-guilds than any other city of Asia; wool-workers, linen-workers, leather-workers, dyers, tanners, etc.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

To Paul, that lone man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him meant that the great continent of Europe was calling him. Yet when he was not disobedient to the vision, and had crossed over into Europe, he was content to sit down by the seashore and talk to a very small group, and the conversion of the continent began with the conversion of one individual, Lydia, the seller of purple.

"Come over and help us," is the cry which church-school teachers have heard. Their work is with small groups. What of the results? "God does not call men and women to his service in spectacular fashion today. He speaks to their souls, and to those who answer him he offers a task which in the beginning gives no indication of what its results will be. But if one attempts it and accepts its increasing responsibilities, it grows in his hands to be a thing of power."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL'S CALL TO EUROPE

Beginning the Lesson

Recall Troy in the lore of Homer and Virgil, the city of Priam, the home of the beautiful Helen, where Achilles chased Hector around its walls, where the cunning Greeks played off the wooden horse upon the Trojans. Its site today is strewn with carvings, mouldings and marble pedestals. In the company of Paul we are now only three or four miles from ancient Troy. By what route has Paul reached this city of Troas? Why has he come? Who is with him?

Have you ever wondered at the seeming ease with which Paul made his plans to travel over Asia Minor and Macedonia? Paul roamed back and forth around the Mediterranean world without the slightest hesitation. It was a time when there was universal peace, for from the Atlantic to the Euphrates there was the strong government of Rome.

Except during the four winter months, sailing vessels ran regularly from Alexandria to Rome by way of the coast of Asia Minor. Everywhere over the Roman Empire there were fine Roman roads which were kept in perfect condition. "Maps of the

roads, lists of halting-places and distances, and other means whereby intended travelers could sketch out their route, were common. A fragment of an account of the road through the Cilician Gates, such as might have been purchased by Paul, has been found in Rome. Hirers of horses, of light cars with two wheels, and of more luxurious four-wheeled carriages, could be found at least in the larger cities; and ordinary travelers who could afford it, could easily hire means of conveyance from place to place."

Paul's Imperialism

Paul was no Galilean peasant, but a citizen of the Roman Empire. His outlook always was imperial. No other disciple or apostle at the time of his call had such a wide field opened before him. He set out to be a world conqueror. He took the world for his parish from the very beginning. He was a little man with a great soul, like John Wesley. He never was satisfied with the territories traversed or the work already done. He always planned wider itineraries and greater things. He was the incarnation of enterprise. He had a boundless ambition. His plans always outran his possibilities. He dreamed of a kingdom, world-wide and eternal. No other apostle had such an imperial program. No other apostle did so much to realize such a program. It was his imperialism which made Paul the greatest missionary the Christian Church has produced.—D. A. Hayes, in Paul and His Epistles.

Paul's Call to Europe

What was this Macedonia and this Europe which the man in the vision represented? Did it want the gospel? Had it sent for him because it was restless and craving and uneasy, and could not be satisfied until it heard the truth about Jesus Christ, which Paul of Tarsus had to tell? Nothing of the kind whatsoever. Europe was going on perfectly contented in its heathenism. As far as we know, there was not one man in Macedonia who wanted Paul. When he went over there the next day, he found what? A few bigoted Jews, some crazy soothsayers and witches, multitudes of indifferent heathen, a few open-hearted men and women who heard and believed what he had to tell them; but not one who had believed before, or wanted to believe—not one who met him at the ship and said, "Come, we have waited for you; we sent for you; we want your help."

Who then sent the man from Macedonia? Ah! there is just the key to it. God sent him. Not the Macedonians themselves. They did not want the gospel. God sent him, because he saw that they needed the gospel. The mysterious man was an utterance, not of the conscious want, but of the unconscious need of those people. —Phillips Brooks.

The Divine Imperialism

There can be no doubt that Christ intended a religion that should be world-wide. The passion of propaganda has always been the master-passion of Christianity. There have been ebbs and flows in that passion, but the tide has always turned back in its strength. There have been long periods of deadness, but always the fire has broken out again. Men have vainly tried to localize and parochialize it; hidden in the heart of it is the leaven of its Founder's divine imperialism, which has continually forced its way to the surface. No sooner has the Church appeared comfortably dead and its influence negligible, than the flame of propaganda breaks out anew in a Francis of Assisi, a Loyola, a Xavier. In the moral deadness of the Eighteenth Century when men of light and leading declared Christianity an exploded fallacy, there appears John Wesley with his noble motto, "The world is my parish," and the wonders of Pentecost are repeated in the great Evangelical Revival. So the story runs. Before us passes the sublime procession of the Christian propagandists; Wycliff and his Lollards, Wesley and his evangelists, Asbury and his circuit-riders Coke and Carey in India, Judson in Burmah, Morrison in China, Chalmers in New Guinea, Paton in the New Hebrides; and all are one in the supreme conviction that the religion they proclaim is meant for the whole world, and that never can Jesus see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied till the whole world hears and accepts his Gospel.—W. J. Dawson, in a Sermon.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Mere darkness is an appeal for light. See Chapters I and IX of God's Missionary Plan for the World, by J. W. Bashford.

2. Paul's faith. See Chapter XXI of The Character of Paul, by Charles E. Jefferson.

3. Woman's place in the church.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Of what other accusation does that of the slave owners remind you, and why? 2. What kinds of business does religion hurt today? 3. What famous Roman committed suicide at Philippi? 4. Why did Paul insist upon being honorably dismissed? 5. Should a Christian overlook injustices?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PIONEERING IN EUROPE

Beginning the Lesson

A British writer, Mark Rutherford, tells in one of his books how on holidays the boys of a small village were wont to trudge three miles down to the main coach road just to read the captivating words on the sign-post there—To London—To York. What marvelous thought the magic words called up! "The romance of the mysterious fingers pointing mutely down the winding road along which the coaches rattled on their way to the great capitals was an opening into infinity to the boys." Paul came on his second journey to just such an opening into infinity, and there were mysterious fingers pointing the way. Where was he? How had he reached Troas? What beckoning hand did he see? What did he decide it meant?

How Lydia was Led to Christ

It was the Sabbath morning in the Roman colony of Philippi. But Philippi did not know it! All days were alike there, unless it happened to become idol festival, when there were more feasting and more merriment and more wickedness than usual. There were many idol-worshipers in Philippi—and many who believed in nothing at all—but it was hard to find a worshiper of the true God. On this Sabbath morning buying and selling went on in the markets as usual; the companies of Roman soldiers went in and out of the castle and the barracks; offerings were brought into the gaudily decorated heathen temples; and, in a quiet little enclosure down by the riverside four men and a few women were praying. When the prayers were finished a small man, in the dress of a Jewish rabbi, stood up to speak.

"My friends," he said, "I have a wonderful story to tell, and I have come a long way to tell it. Will you have patience with me while I tell you the strange story of my own life up to now?"

Amongst the little group of women whose attention was fixed upon Paul, the missionary, was one who seemed by her dress and appearance to be rich and prosperous. As Paul ceased to speak she drew a long breath and sat silent for a moment or two. Then, rising, she stepped up to the preacher, saying, in a voice full of emotion: "Sir, yours is indeed a wonderful story. It fills my heart with mingled sorrow and joy to know that the Messiah has truly visited our land. Will you baptize me, that I, too, may be numbered among the friends of the Lord Jesus? I am like yourself, sir, no native of Philippi, having come from Thyatira, but I have a business here where I trade in purple cloths."

"By what name shall I baptize thee, lady?" asked Paul.

"I am called Lydia," she answered, "and these" (turning to the women who attended her) "are maids in my household. I beg that they also may receive baptism from the hands of either yourself or your friend."

When the simple ceremony was over Lydia asked where Paul and his friends were staying, adding hospitably, "I hope that you will all now come to my house and stay with me." And this they gladly did.

"What led you, sirs, to come to Macedonia?" asked the lady, as they sat at their evening meal.

"It was the Spirit of the Lord guiding us, lady," said Doctor Luke. "Rabbi Paul here will tell you how it came to pass."

"I had not meant to come hither," said Paul gravely. "When my friend Silas and myself left Antioch we expected only to visit the churches already formed. At Lystra, I persuaded my young friend Timothy to travel with us, and coming down to Troas, as we were bidden by the Spirit of the Lord, we found the doctor, who was willing to join our company. There, at Troas, I had a strange dream. I thought I saw a man of Macedonia beckoning to me and crying, 'Come over the sea and help us.' And when I awoke I was sure that the Lord was calling us to preach the good news in Macedonia And he bade the very winds help us, for on

that day there was a fair wind which brought us hither speedily that we might meet you and tell you the story of Jesus and his love."

"I can never be thankful enough that you obeyed the call you heard in your dream," said Lydia, "and I trust that before you leave Philippi many may be turned from idols to worship the living and true God."—Grace Winter in The Sunday School Chronicle.

How Missionaries Are Led

There is nothing in the New Testament more dramatic than the great missionary's silent journey across Asia. He set his face towards the evangelization of the stately commercial capitals of the Eastern world. But in each place he was "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word," and trudged on in stillness. "The Spirit suffered him not." As the Quakers would say, "There was a stop in his mind against it." And the result of Paul's implicit obedience to that mysterious inward restraint was—Europe! It shifted the balance of power, and altered the face of the world. As Benjamin Kidd has demonstrated, the great western empires sprang out of that extraordinary summons, that mystical submission.

It was ever so. Carey planned to evangelize the South Seas. The inward monitor said India! Livingstone selected China. The voice said Africa! And who that realizes what Europe has meant to the world, what Carey has meant to India, and what Livingstone has meant to Africa, shall doubt the wisdom of unquestioning compliance with that secret dictator?

The Need Is the Call

"To what people did you go as a missionary?" a chance acquaintance inquired.

"To the Pampangans," I answered.

"Did they ask you to come?"

"No," I said, "they did not ask me to come."

"Then why did you go?" he demanded sharply.

In answer I told him an incident of my college days. "I was on my way to my room one night, when my attention was attracted to a brilliant light in the rear room of the Morgan house next door. There was a high wind blowing. I hurried across the lawn and came directly under the brilliantly lighted window—and there I was standing right in front of the dining room window of the Morgan house. It was supper time, and the family was seated about the table enjoying the evening meal. I saw flames in the room above catch the lace curtains and spring instantly to the ceiling. But not wishing to disturb the family, nor to interfere with their family customs, and because they did not ask me to tell them that their house was on fire—I walked on home to my room."

"No, you didn't!" exclaimed my new-found friend.

"Well, what did I do, then?" I asked.

"You yelled 'Fire!' as loud as you could!" he replied.

"Yes, I yelled 'Fire!' If I had known that their house was on fire, and had not told, and the fact had become known about me—there is no community in America where I afterwards would have been allowed to live in peace.

"No, the Pampangans did not ask me to come, but I knew the peril of people who are without Christ; and I know what the love of Christ means to the life; and, knowing that, I was bound to go and tell them."—William A. Brown, in New Thoughts on an Old Book.

Sentence Sermons

To know the need should prompt the deed.—Mary Lyon.

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand.—Edward Everett Hale.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who was the girl and how had her masters lost hope of making money through her? 2. What was the real reason for which those men brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates? 3. What were the stocks, and what was the effect of having one's feet fastened in them? 4. Why could Paul and Silas sing hymns? 5. Why did the jailor wish to kill himself? 6. When Peter escaped from prison, what was done to the prison guards? (Acts 12.19.) 7. Read Longfellow's poem entitled The Slave Singing at Midnight. 8. Find a reference to this event in Whittier's poem entitled Cassandra Southwick.

LESSON IX—AUGUST 26

PAUL IN A ROMAN PRISON

GOLDEN TEXT: Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4.4

LESSON Acts 16.16-40 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.6-13

ACTS 16.19 But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, 20 and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. 34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SECOND CHRISTIAN CONVERT IN PHILIPPI, verses 16-18. Paul was greatly disturbed at Philippi by a fortune-telling maid who kept following him and Silas and crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation." Professor Ramsay thinks that the slave girl's mind had become distorted and diseased by her belief in her supernatural possession, but was all the more acute in certain perceptions and intuitions, and that she had become alive to the moral influence which the intense faith of the strangers gave them.

The girl followed Paul and Silas for many days, and her reiterated chant drew a crowd of curiosity seekers. Paul was "sore troubled," and at length he turned to her, and in the name of Jesus Christ bade the spirit leave her, and she became wholly normal. Nothing further is told about this girl whose story arouses our sympathy. One writer expresses his belief that "She would partake of the generous help of Lydia and of the other Christian women at Philippi, who would see in her no longer a bondservant of the men who had dominion over her, but a sister beloved in the Lord."

II. THE MISSIONARIES SCOURGED AND IMPRISONED, verses 19-24. The slave girl had lost faith in her own powers and the people no longer believed in her. She could tell no more fortunes, and was no longer profitable to her masters. Paul and Silas were to blame. Greatly angered, her owners turned upon the two men and dragged them into the market-place before the rulers. Every Roman Colony had two chief magistrates, or prætors, as they were called. The market-place was the public square where business was conducted and justice (or injustice) was administered.

"Lord Darlington, in Lady Windemere's Fan, flings off the effective epigram that 'A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.'" The owners of the slave girl with the abnormal mind had a very definite sense of commercial value. They did not have much sense of human values. When the insane girl was cured they were furiously angry. They did not give a moment's thought to the fact that she was saved to a normal life. They only thought of the fact that while they could capitalize her insanity, her sanity had no commercial value at all. So they began to stir up the city against Paul and Silas.

"Any nation which has a brilliant and far-reaching commercial development is sure to meet the temptation to which the keepers of this slave girl sur-

rendered. Men who are constantly thinking of the success of a great business are tempted to think more of its successes than of the means by which it is obtained. They are tempted to think more of economic values than of human values. They are tempted to think more of financial return than of moral responsibilities.

"On the other hand, those who are working to secure a larger share of the returns of labor to the toilers of the world meet the same temptation. An extreme illustration is found in a booklet regarding the Industrial Workers of the World, published by that organization. A paragraph treating of 'I.W.W. Tactics or Methods' reads: 'As a revolutionary organization the Industrial Workers of the World aim to use any and all tactics that will get the results sought with the least expenditure of time and energy. The tactics used are determined solely by the power of the organization to make good in their use. The question of right and wrong does not concern us'" (Lynn H. Hough).

The Romans held Jews in great contempt and were upheld in their attitude by the recent act of the Emperor Claudius who had banished all Jews from Rome.

Accordingly, the slave owners began their statement of their case by saying, "These men, being Jews," and the accusation they brought against them was that they "do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans." Just as the Sanhedrin could not give the real, personal reason for demanding the death of Christ, and put forth a trumped-up political charge, so these slave owners could not demand the punishment of Paul and Silas on a charge of causing them to lose their gains, which were illicit, and therefore they assumed a very patriotic air and made their high-sounding charge. The false reason they gave was yet a true statement, for if the Romans believed Paul's message they would turn from their worship of idols and of the Emperor.

"The same struggle between the alleged and the real motive still goes on," a British writer declares. "When temperance legislation is proposed, think of the kind of patriotic cry that is raised. 'This is a blow at the liberty of the subject.' 'Why should the working man not have his beer?' Yet the real motive for the outcry is that the pockets of the liquor-sellers are touched, and the holders of brewery shares stand a chance of losing."

The crowd clamored for the punishment of the two strangers, and the magistrates, without stopping to investigate the charge, ordered them stripped and beaten. In 2 Cor. 11.25 Paul refers to this scourging. Evidently they were not given a chance to plead their Roman citizenship, for it was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen. The professional scourgers were called lictors, and their weapon consisted of a number of rods bound together. The blows fell on the bare backs of the victims.

A Lictor

Paul and Silas were then handed over to a jailor. He put them in the inner prison, which may have been underground, and fastened their feet in the stocks. The stocks consisted of two heavy beams, one upon the other—the upper beam was lifted, and after the prisoner's ankles were put across two depressions in the lower beam, it was let down and fastened. Then as it was impossible for the prisoner to draw his feet through, he could not escape, and he was kept in a most uncomfortable position.

"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (Paul).

III. THE STRANGE RELEASE, verses 25, 26. At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Their backs were lacerated by the blows they had received, and they were held in a cramped position, but, as Tertullian says, "Their legs in the stocks pained them not, whose souls were in heaven."

That is a brave life which is a cheerful life, not given up to selfish gayety, but controlled by a courageous brightness of spirit.

Suddenly an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opening all the doors and loosing every prisoner's chains. We must not have in mind a prison such as is erected in our land. "Anyone who has seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open; each door was closed merely by a bar, and the earthquake, as it passed along the ground, forced the doorposts apart so that the bar slipped from its hold and the door swung open. An earthquake behaves sometimes like a playful, good-natured sprite, when it spares its full terrors."

Aroused out of sleep and seeing the prison door open, the jailor jumped to the conclusion that his prisoners had escaped, and he was about to kill himself when Paul's voice stopped him. He was responsible for his prisoners, and disgrace and death would have been his punishment had they escaped. Suicide under such circumstances was regarded a Roman virtue: compare Acts 12.19.

"Do thyself no harm," Paul shouted: "for we are all here." "An earthquake strikes panic into the semi-oriental mob in the Ægean lands," Professor Ramsay writes, "and it seems to me quite natural that the prisoners made no dash for liberty when the opportunity was offered them. Moreover, they were still only partially free, and they had only a moment for action."

Since it was midnight and dark, the question has been raised as to how Paul from his inner prison could see that the jailor was about to kill himself. Professor Ramsay tells us to understand that the inner prison was a small cell which had no windows and no opening except into the outer and larger prison, and that the outer prison had one large door in the opposite wall. "Then, if there was any faint starlight in the sky, still more if the moon was up, a person in the outer doorway would be distinguishable to one whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, but the jailor would see only black darkness in the prison."

The jailor called for lights, and the police who brought them attended to the other prisoners while he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He saw in the earthquake the hand of God, and in these two men the messengers of God. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he cried, as he brought them out of the prison. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house," was Paul's answer, and then to him and his household Paul "spoke the word of the Lord," and they all believed.

When the jailor cried, "Lords, what must I do to be delivered?" he was simply a man stricken with panic and wondering what was the next thing, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan believes. He thinks of Paul as saying, "You have called us lords; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Lord of human life. You have asked what you shall do to be saved, and your feeling is one born of fear and desire to be saved from this hour of difficulty. Believe on this Lord, and you shall be saved from this hour, and from all hours of difficulty."

"The one thing needful for the blinded, bewildered Paul in the house of Ananias; for the Philippian jailor ready to perish by his own hand; for the barbarians of Lycaonia, sacrificing to false gods; for the Athenians, ignorantly worshiping an unknown god; for the publicans and harlots of Corinth; for the proconsul Sergius Paulus, Felix and Drusilla, Festus, King Agrippa and Bernice, was the faith in 'the Lord Jesus Christ by which they should be saved' " (Marcus Buell).

Then Paul took time to teach "that brutalized jailor," and the result of his patient teaching was the jailor's belief in Jesus Christ, "so that the very life of God possessed his soul."

"Danger and surprise discover the depths of a man's soul. A man of this elemental type, in such an experience, comes simply to God, if he comes at all. There were soldiers in the Great War who awakened to God and welcomed God's mercy in just this fashion. It is not the only way into the great experience, but it is one way" (R. C. Gillie).

The jailor washed the stripes which Paul and Silas had received, cleansing them from blood at the prison fountain, or reservoir, and afterwards the missionaries baptized him and the members of his household. Chrysostom here observes that "The waters of baptism washed the jailor from deeper stains and more grievous wounds than those of the lictors' rods."

"The converted jailor began to undo the work of the past night. 'He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes.' That is ever one of the signs of a truly converted life, the attempt to undo the wrongs done in the past" (J. H. Jowett).

IV. THE PUBLIC ACQUITTAL, verses 35-40. The magistrates, as the jailor had done, connected the earthquake with Paul and Silas, and they sent word to the jailor to release them. "Let them come themselves and bring us out!" exclaimed Paul indignantly, when informed of their order. He and Silas had been publicly beaten; they would not be privately released. They had been punished uncondemned; they would not be sent away unacquitted. Moreover, they were Roman citizens, and it was a crime to scourge them. When Paul's words were reported to the magistrates they trembled for their own safety, and hastened to come humbly and beseech Paul and Silas to leave the city. Paul and Silas then left the prison acquitted. They tarried outside at Lydia's home, and then left Philippi.

"No one thought the less of the injured disciples for asserting their rights; they were thought of all the more respectfully as citizens with whom no liberty was to be taken. We are not most like Christ when we allow ourselves to be trampled upon. 'Quit you like men, be strong.' No false meekness. It is a grave fault in a good man to allow injustice, even to himself" (W. L. Watkinson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

A maid having a spirit of divination, verse 16. "A maid having a spirit, a Python," is the alternate translation for "a soothsaying maid" which is given in the margin of the Revised Version. The great dragon at Delphi slain by Apollo was called a Python, and according to Plutarch that was the name given also at this time to a ventriloquist.

The Most High God who proclaimed unto you the way of salvation, verse 17. Professor Ramsay says that "God the Highest" was a widespread pagan expression, and "salvation" was the object of many vows and prayers to the gods.

Victors in the Famous Battle of Philippi; Octavius Cæsar and Anthony on the left; Lepidus on the right.

The jailor was about to kill himself, verse 27. It was here at Philippi that the defeated Cassius covered his face and ordered his freedmen to kill him with his own sword, and he died exclaiming, "Cæsar, thou art avenged, even with the sword that killed thee." Titinius, his messenger, held it to be "a Roman's part" to follow the stern example. It was here at Philippi, too, that Brutus, "the noblest Roman of them all," killed himself by running upon his sword. And here the jailor of Paul almost committed suicide in the same way.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What persecution did Paul meet at Antioch of Pisidia? At Iconium? At Lystra? When Paul fell to the earth, trembling and astonished, on his way to Damascus, what did he cry out? What was the accusation against Jesus, and what was the real reason for his being brought before the Roman official? Why was it unlawful for the magistrates to have Paul scourged?

What Else Happened at Philippi

From Paul's Epistle to the Philippians we hear of Timothy's zeal, who served with Paul as a son with a father in furthering the gospel, of Silas and Luke and Clement and Epaphroditus and of Euodia and Syntyche, the women whom Paul remembers gratefully for their labors. We know that he spent some time in Philippi and founded a flourishing church there. Luke, however, tells us nothing of this, but narrates the event which led to Paul's expulsion from the city.

For Philippi, see our last lesson.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

I have often wondered if Paul was disappointed. The work was so utterly different from the dream. He had seen in his vision the hands of Macedonia stretched

out, and now they were indeed stretched out but only to lead him to the inner prison at Philippi. It was a strange and startling contradiction. A weakling would have been tempted to deny the vision. But Paul was far too faithful to despair, and we see now that God was in it.

So when the vision of God comes to us, and we set out to do some little service for him, there will not be a task and there will not be a day in which the vision will not be contradicted. Our service may not turn out as we hoped; our prayers may not be answered as we wished; we may get no welcome from those who seem to call us; we may look for liberty and find a prison-house. But God makes no mistake. The work is his. He can transmute our failures into tomorrow's triumphs. When the dawn of the cloudless morning breaks above us, we shall waken to find he hath done all things well.—G. H. Morrison, in The Footsteps of the Flock.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL AS AN EVANGELIST

Beginning the Lesson

When Paul had had his vision at Troas, straightway, as Luke writes, "we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." But had they been led by God in this coming into Macedonia? Was not their coming a mistake? So it seems. For what could be more hopeless than Paul's situation as we find it in our text, scourged, and cast into an inner prison, his feet in the stocks, guards near by? What chance has he now for delivering his message? Was Paul cast down? Why was he in prison?

Paul Advocated Preaching in Season and out of Season

It seems a strange time to seek the conversion of the jailor. It is after midnight, Paul is suffering greatly from the effects of the beating he has received and from the torture of his long-continued position in the stocks, and he has just survived an earthquake. Don't you think he might be pardoned if he answered the jailor's question by saying, "Let me rest a little while, and in the morning we will discuss the matter"? To answer thus was no temptation to Paul. Nothing gave him such happiness as the opportunity of making his Lord known to an eager listener.

Stocks Erected at Worcestershire, England

When Paul was writing to Timothy, his "beloved Child," as he called him, he bade him "preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season"—just as he himself had done. Uncle John Vassar, later the founder of Vassar College, was, like Paul, a preacher in season and out of season. When our Civil War began he went to the Federal Army as an agent for the American Tract Society. In the battle that followed he was taken prisoner. When the Southern commander questioned him, he replied:

"I am a colporteur of the American Tract Society, and I try to save the souls of the dear boys that fall around me daily. General, do you love Jesus?"

The commander evaded the question and replied that he knew the Tract Society which had sent him.

"But, my dear General," his prisoner persisted, "do you love Jesus?"

Some one near the commander then interposed. "General," he said, "take the man's pledge that he will not tell of our whereabouts for twenty-four hours, and let us see him out of our lines, or we shall have a prayer-meeting from here to Richmond!"

A Zealous Evangelist

"Panjabi was my classmate in school, and an earnest Christian. Some time ago when in Tibet, he visited a noted shrine and started preaching the good news to the priests and worshipers. He was interrupted and told not to preach further, but he insisted on continuing. Then they arrested him and put him in jail, but he began preaching to the prisoners. This was unexpected, and word soon reached

the officer in charge. Panjabi was ordered to keep still, but he felt no call to do so. Then they bound him hand and foot and cast him into solitary confinement. This indeed seemed a hindrance to his work of giving the message of the Kingdom. Yet he could sing, and the old prison was soon ringing with Christian hymns. The jailors were at first disconcerted. After some consideration on their part the door of the cell opened and a man appeared with a basket on his head. The contents were sprinkled over the prisoner's naked body, and he saw to his horror that some three dozen hungry leeches were attacking him. Bound as he was, he could not protect himself against them.

"He suffered terribly, but prayed for help. It seems that a report concerning him had reached the ears of a higher official. Finding on inquiry that the man had done no harm, he ordered his release. Panjabi has recently been preaching in Jubbulpore."

Every Christian an Evangelist

Isn't that the work of men specially set apart or peculiarly endowed? No, evangelizing is simply spreading the good news, letting the man nearest you know, constantly through your life and at proper times through your lips, that in the religion of Christ which you profess you have hold of something big, emancipating, immensely interesting. Character, as some one has said, is not taught, but caught.

Your presence, your gift, your prayers, your Christian life and the contagion of your cheerful and robust faith—these things you owe to the church with which you have solemnly covenanted. One can do all these things at once without waiting for a pastoral assignment to a specific duty or any word from any kind of headquarters. These are the staple virtues and activities of the Christian life. They gave beauty and power to our religion when it was young. They will yet make it a resistless force in the life of the modern world.—Editorial in The Congregationalist.

Why There Is not more Witnessing for Christ

I am struck by this fact—the silence of Christian people today, the absence of joyful, eager Christian testimony. I don't see Christian people aflame to spread abroad the knowledge of our Lord. I don't see them zealous in missionary work. I don't see them making strenuous and sacrificial effort to share the gospel with those who are ignorant and out of the way. Multitudes are content just to enjoy the comforts of Christianity themselves; they give no sign of eagerness to share them. We are not possessed in these days by any evangelistic fervor, by any holy passion for souls. Why is that? Because we have not any deep sense of the blessings of the gospel ourselves, because we have not any very vivid sense of the wonder of Christ's cross, of the glory of his redeeming love, of the blessedness of forgiveness. The gospel has not become my gospel for many of us.—J. D. Jones.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Is Andrew Fuller right in saying that a man has only as much religion as he can command in time of trouble?

2. Is suicide ever justifiable?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the modern name of Thessalonica, and why is it familiar to us? 2. Review Paul's discourse to the Jews at Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13.16-42; what part of that discourse was probably given at Thessalonica? 3. Why did Paul write to the Thessalonians? 4. In what sense was it true that Paul was turning the world upside down? 5. What are some of the things that need to be revolutionized in our city? 6. Are we the ones to do it?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE SOURCE OF PAUL'S JOY

Beginning the Lesson

A Chinese Christian who used to be a soothsayer was talking recently about his earlier experiences. "It was much easier to make a living as a soothsayer," he said. "'How is it that you gave up that fine business?' men now ask me; 'you managed so well to cast a man's nativity, to choose days, and to predict our lucky and unlucky days, and now you are selling these foreign books; and since they are in the country, the gods have sent us plague and famine in their wrath.' 'Listen to me,

my honorable brethren,' I answer. 'No soothsayer knows his own fate, and how should he know that of other people? Since I have read this small book, I know my destiny to be a saved child of God, and that makes my future life bright and hopeful, because I found in this Gospel my Savior.'"

Very similar were the experiences of a soothsaying maid at Philippi. Who will tell the story? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Paul Endured as Seeing him Who is Invisible

Paul was small of stature and weak in appearance but compounded all of pluck. He may have been feeble with fever at times, or he may have suffered with some chronic complaint, or he may have been subject to recurrent attacks, but nevertheless he must have had a physical fiber in him which was capable of most extraordinary endurance. As a mere physical achievement his life-work seldom has been equaled among men. The secret of his career is to be found in his indomitable soul and his complete consecration. Difficulties might multiply, friends might dissuade, everything might seem to be in opposition, and yet when Paul saw his duty clearly set before him he went straight forward without swerving.

He had something of the serene indifference to all consequences involved in his obedience to the law of his Lord which is characteristic of the ocean tides and the stellar courses. Paul lived as they, in the absoluteness of his obedience and the singleness of his devotion. Paul attained a "mighty life" because he was a man of mighty powers concentrated upon a single aim. That aim was the conversion of men to the practise of the holy life consequent upon a genuine faith in his risen and triumphant Lord. That made him the world's greatest missionary.—D. A. Hayes, in Paul and his Epistles.

The Effect of Another Song in Prison

Thirty men, red-eyed and disheveled, lined up before a judge of the San Francisco police court. It was the regular morning company of "drunks and disorderlies." Some were old and hardened, others hung their heads in shame. Just as the momentary disorder attending the bringing in of the prisoners quieted down a strange thing happened. A strong, clear voice from below began singing

"Last night as I lay a-sleeping,
There came a dream so fair."

Last night? It had been for them all a nightmare or a drunken stupor. The song was such a contrast to the horrible fact that no one could fail of a sudden shock at the thought the song suggested.

"I stood in old Jerusalem,
Beside the temple there."

The song went on. The judge had paused. He made a quiet inquiry. A former member of a famous opera company, known all over the country, was awaiting trial for forgery. It was he who was singing in his cell.

Meantime the song went on, and every man in the line showed emotion. One or two dropped on their knees. One boy at the end of the line, after a desperate effort at self-control, leaned against the wall, buried his face in his folded arms and sobbed, "O mother, mother!"

The sobs, cutting the very heart of the men who heard, and the song, still welling its way through the courtroom, blended in the hush. At length one man protested:

"Judge," said he, "have we got to submit to this? We're here to take our punishment, but this—" He, too, began to sob.

It was impossible to proceed with the business of the court, yet the judge gave no order to stop the song. The police sergeant, after a surprised effort to keep the men in line, stepped back and waited with the rest. The song moved on to its climax:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Sing, for the night is o'er!
Hosanna in the highest! hosanna for evermore!"

In an ecstasy of melody the last words rang out, and then there was silence.

The judge looked into the faces of the men before him. There was not one who was not touched by the song; not one in whom some better impulse was not stirred. He did not call the cases singly—a kind word of advice, and he dismissed them all.

No man was fined or sentenced to the workhouse that morning. The song had done more good than punishment could have accomplished.—The Youth's Companion.

The Power of Song

"When your troubles become too great for prayer, then begin to sing," counseled Martin Luther. Don't you think that was one of the reasons why Paul and Silas sang in prison? It must have cheered their own hearts to burst forth into song, and they sang some Psalm in praise of God who was their Refuge and Strength, their Help in times of trouble.

Martin Luther knew the help which music has for one. "Next to theology," he said, "I give the highest place to music, for thereby anger is forgotten, melancholy and many tribulations and evil thoughts are driven away." And again he says, "Music is the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given to us." Of course you know his beautiful hymn beginning, "A sure stronghold is our God." These are the opening lines:

"A sure stronghold our God is he,
A trusty shield and weapon;
Our help he'll be, and set us free
From every ill can happen."

After Luther's death Melanchthon and his friends were sent into banishment, and when on entering Weimar they heard a girl singing Luther's hymn in the street they were greatly cheered. "Sing on, dear daughter mine," said Melanchthon, "thou knowest not what comfort thou bringest to our hearts."

"I Would Rather Sing"

An eight-year-old child with a cut in her hand was brought to a physician. It was necessary to take a few stitches with the surgeon's needle. While the physician was making preparations the little girl swung her foot nervously against the chair, and was gently admonished by her mother.

"That will do no harm," said the doctor, kindly, "as long as you hold her hand still," adding, with a glance at the strained, anxious face of the child, "you may cry as much as you like."

"I would rather sing," replied the child.

"All right; that would be better. What can you sing?"

"I can sing '"Give," said the little stream.' Do you know that?"

"I am not sure," responded the doctor. "How does it begin?"

The little patient at once proceeded to illustrate.

"That's beautiful," said the doctor. "I want to hear the whole of it."

All the while the skilled fingers were sewing up the wound the sweet childish voice sounded bravely through the room and the only tears shed on the occasion came from the eyes of her mother. It is, I believe, a physiological fact that some expression of one's feelings tends to lessen pain. Since weeping and groaning are distressing to one's friends, how would it do for us all to try singing instead?—The Congregationalist.

Sentence Sermons

A scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties.—Scout Law.

Sing a song of victory;
A heart brimful of cry
Can be soon changed to laughter;
A song will drown a sigh.
Sing of truth that fails not,
Of God who never sleeps;
Sing with confidence in him
Who his people keeps.—Florence A. Bertels.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is the meaning of "behooved"? Of "consorted"? 2. What is the meaning of the charge made in verse six? 3. What was the charge made against Jesus which verse seven recalls? 4. What letters did Paul write to the church he founded at Thessalonica? 5. What did the Philippians do for Paul while at Thessalonica, as Paul tells in Phil. 4.16? 6. What two kinds of hearers does our text show us?

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 2

PAUL IN THESSALONICA

GOLDEN TEXT: The opening of thy words giveth light. Psalm 119.130

LESSON Acts 17.1-15; Romans 15.18-20; 1 Thessalonians 5.12-23

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

ACTS 17.1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, 3 opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he,* I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. 4. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. 8 And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THREE SABBATHS IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT THESSALONICA, verses 1-4. "Although at Philippi we had suffered greatly, and had been insulted, yet on we came to your city and boldly declared to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition"—in some such words Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2.2). From Philippi, Paul and his companions passed through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia on the way to Thessalonica. There they tarried several months, as we know from Paul's letters to the church he founded in that city. "You remember, brethren," Paul also wrote, "how we worked day and night to support ourselves, while we preached unto you the gospel of God; for we would not be a burden to any of you" (1 Thess. 2.9).

Our historian, however, records only Paul's preaching for three successive Sabbaths in the synagogue. He "reasoned with them from the Scriptures," Luke says; that is, he cited Scripture passages which were prophetic of the Christ; he then showed that Jesus fulfilled these prophesies, that it behooved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead; and thus he reasoned, or argued, that the Jesus whom he proclaimed to them is the Christ.

Mary Queen of Scots once cried out to John Knox: "You teach one thing, the Church of Rome teaches another; which shall I believe?" Knox's answer is memorable: "Ye shall believe neither, madam; ye shall believe God, who speaketh his word, and save as we agree thereto, ye shall believe neither of us." Every conviction should be tested by the spirit and teaching of Christ.

The result of Paul's preaching was that many of the devout Greeks (Greeks who attended the synagogue and worshiped God), and many of the chief women, were convinced of the truth of his message and "consorted with Paul and Silas," cast their lot in with them and shared their way of life. They were afterwards zealous in extending the good news that Paul brought to them, for in his letter Paul says, "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia (Greece), but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth."

II. THE UPROAR FOMENTED BY PAUL'S ENEMIES, verses 5-9. Great numbers of Jews were jealous, as everywhere they were of Paul's success, and gathering a crowd of idle loafers, they set the city in an uproar. These "vile fellows of the rabble," as Luke calls them, neither knew nor cared anything about Paul's work nor about the jealousy of the Jews, but if there was to be any kind of rioting, they wanted to be in it. The Greek word *agoraioi,* translated *rabble,* comes from

agora, market-place; they were men of the market-place, market-loafers, idlers who had no business of their own, and were ready for any kind of excitement or mischief that might turn up.

Every city has its loafers, idle hangers-on of the streets who may not intend any evil course, and may, indeed, escape from committing evil, but who are certain to deteriorate sadly. "Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams," said Gladstone; "and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and moral stature, beyond your darkest reckoning."

A great crowd was collected, and the home of Jason was mobbed. Paul and Silas could not be found, so they seized Jason and others, dragged them before the rulers of the city, and charged them with sedition and treason—Jason had received in his home those who had "turned the world upside down," who proclaimed "another King, one Jesus." The Roman Government cared not how many religions were held nor how many gods were worshiped, and therefore Paul was never accused of being a Christian. He was accused of interfering with trade, with inciting men to violence, of turning the world upside down. What greater tribute could they have paid to the effectiveness of Paul's teaching!

"In the sense that its promulgators imagined, the accusation was untrue, but in another, deeper sense, it was profoundly true. Christianity is not revolutionary, has never been so, in the sense in which 'revolution' ought to give any heart cause to fear. Christianity is revolutionary, and must be so forever, in the sense in which nothing but revolution can give any heart ground for hope.

"Does not the world need turning upside down? Is it so beautifully ordered in all that concerns human life that we desire no revolution? Is our social life so full of sweetness and harmony, is our politics so pervaded by reasonableness and justice, are our international relationships so charged with mutual understanding and good will, that we can contemplate all these things and be glad they are as they are?"

"It is generally supposed to be easier to stop one man from speaking than to stop a mob from opposing his speaking. The city magistrates took bond of Jason that there should be no more rioting in the city, and there was only one method by which Jason could prevent rioting; it was to put a stop to the preaching. This was a very ingenious device. If Paul continued his ministry, he would endanger the man who had generously taken him to his house and cared for him. So he retreated from Thessalonica" (Lyman Abbott).

III. ON TO BERŒA, verses 10-12. Paul and Silas left Thessalonica at night. They continued their way westward to the city of Berœa. There in the synagogue they found unprejudiced Jews who were willing to give his message a fair hearing. No wonder that Luke says, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

To both Thessalonians and Berœans Paul brought a new message, that Jesus was the Christ foretold in the Scriptures. The prejudiced Thessalonian Jews flatly rejected the message without any effort to find out for themselves whether Paul's words agreed with the prophecies. The unprejudiced Berœans gave his message a fair hearing, and then with inquiring spirit looked up the passages and weighed them with Paul's words.

"The vast majority of people are the victims of various prejudices. The willingness to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is one of the rarest of human traits. Do you want to know the truth about the Jews? If so, you will learn many very good things about them. Are you open-minded regarding the Catholics? Are you open to learn the truth about the colored people? Would you be open to the truth that fundamentalists—or liberals—are essentially good? Ask a rock-ribbed Republican how many good Democratic presidents we have had. Ask a Socialist what he thinks of good men. Ask a member of the Ku Klux Klan what he thinks of the Knights of Columbus. Prejudice means that you make your judg-

ments without all the facts, and that you are not willing to evaluate all of the facts at their evident worth" (John R. Ewers).

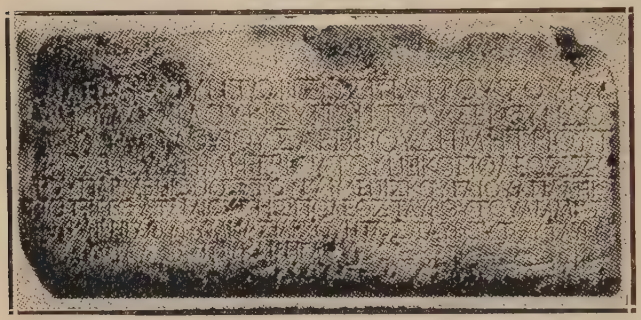
Finding that Paul's words and the prophecies were in agreement, many of the Berœan Jews believed, as did also many of the Greek women of honorable estate, and many of the Greek men. Compare verse 4.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures, verse 2. In the synagogues of the East teaching was the method of instruction, and the Christian evangelists accordingly taught and preached the word. But in the more critical atmosphere of the West dogmatic assertion was not sufficient, and Paul had to adopt the method of reasoning, in which he was an adept. The reasoning, of course, was Jewish; it was based on the Scriptures. But until they recognized the Christ in them, the Scriptures were a sealed book to the Jews.—R. B. Rackham.

They sought to bring them forth to the people, verse 5. Thessalonica had been made a free city by Augustus, and was entirely independent. The people, as in all ancient Greek cities, were the supreme authority. Hence the apostles were to be dragged before the popular assembly.—J. M. Lindsay.

The rulers of the city, verse 6. The Greek word translated "rulers" is "politarchs." Because that title is not found in classical literature, it was long held that Luke was inaccurate here. But across the main street of Thessalonica Octavius Cæsar had erected a triumphal arch, doubtless in commemoration of the victory at Philippi over the Republican leaders, and on the foundation of the arch the names of the city magistrates were inscribed with the title "Politarch." A block with this word upon it is now in the British Museum.



A Block from Thessalonica

Greek women of honorable estate, verse 12. In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens. Men of all classes were impressed by the teaching of Paul, but only women of the leading families; and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition.—W. M. Ramsay.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What cities has Paul thus far visited on his second missionary journey? Where have the Jews followed Paul from one city to another to stir up trouble for him?

On to Thessalonica

From the prison in Philippi Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house for a visit "with the brethren," and then they went on to Thessalonica, one hundred miles to the southwest. They must have remained several months at Thessalonica, for the Philippians twice sent contributions to Paul there (Phil. 4.16), and his letters to the Thessalonians show that his stay with them must have been prolonged. Probably "the three weeks" mentioned in verse 2 covered the time of preaching in the Jewish synagogue; after that Paul turned to the Gentiles.

The End of Paul's Labors in Macedonia, Acts 17.13-15.

The Jews in Thessalonica heard of Paul's success in Berœa, and came thither to stir up trouble again for Paul. Paul was sent by the brethren to the sea and

accompanied to Athens. By his Berœan escort he sent back word to Silas and Timothy, who had remained behind, to join him at once.

Thus Paul's work in Macedonia ended. From each city where he preached he had been driven away by persecutions, but in founding the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa, he had in reality taken possession of the province of Macedonia.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The route taken from Philippi to Thessalonica lay along the Egnatian Way (the great Roman road, seven hundred miles long, which extended from the Hellespont (Dardanelles) to the Adriatic) through Amphipolis and Apollonia, cities which divided the entire distance of about one hundred miles into three days' journeys of nearly equal length.

Thessalonica was the capital of the province of Macedonia. Its situation at the head of the Thermaic Gulf made it a great commercial city. Today it is known as Saloniki, or Salonica. During the World War the troops of the Entente Alliance were landed here to advance upon the enemy on the eastern front.

It is interesting to note that here at Salonica, where a Y. M. C. A. building was erected two or three years ago at the intersection of two streets, one of the streets was named Y. M. C. A. Avenue and the other John P. Mott Street, in honor of a man who is following in Paul's footsteps as an ambassador of Christ.

A Street in Old Saloniki Today

Berœa was forty miles southwest of Thessalonica. Because it lay off the Egnatian Way, Cicero refers to it as an out-of-the-way place. Its modern name is Veria.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Are your pupils receiving the word with all readiness of mind and examining the Scriptures daily? Has this agreement which a prominent evangelist sometimes asks his hearers to sign, an appeal for them? "I promise to examine carefully the evidence that the Bible is God's book and Jesus Christ is God's Son and man's Savior; and if I find reason to believe that this Book is true, and he is man's Savior, I will accept and confess him before men and undertake to follow him."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL'S USE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Beginning the Lesson

See Explanations and Comments.

The Value of the Scriptures in the Christian Campaign

The method of the preachers at Thessalonica is the method of the preachers for all time. The one work of preaching is the opening and alleging of the teaching of the Scriptures about Christ; the presentation of Christ is fulfilling these Scriptures. At Berœa we learn the true attitude of the hearers. Two things are stated: they

heard—that is the open mind; they examined—that is the mind of caution. Those are needed today. First, the open mind. God have mercy on us if we have closed the mind, so that no new light can come in. But God have mercy on us if we open windows and door to everything that claims to be light.—G. Campbell Morgan in The Acts of the Apostles.

Those that Have Turned the World Upside Down

The Canon of Westminster, C. S. Woodward, recently attended the Conference of Young People in London, where the subject discussed was, "Why is it that the young people of the present day are so aloof from the Church?" The reason given which interested him was: "I believe the real fact of the matter is that we young people today do not feel that there is anything like the reality and earnestness in the Church and in Christian people which we should naturally expect to find in them." The speaker explained her meaning to be that there was nothing sufficiently distinctive about Christians as such; you could not define very closely the Christian attitude toward anything; there was a conventional way of going on in the Church and Christian life in general; there was no real push about anything in particular; there was not sufficient earnestness and enthusiasm in those inside the Church.

In discussing the question, Mr. Woodward contrasted the situation in the Church and that in the Socialist movement in England, saying that no one whose recollection goes back twenty or thirty years can fail to be struck by the amazing way in which the Socialist movement has grown and developed. "Today Socialism is one of the strongest and most living forces in the country," he said, "simply because that during these last years the men who have believed in the Socialist faith have believed in it with an intensity and an earnestness which made them willing to undergo a very great deal of hardship in many ways in the early days, and a very great deal of unpopularity; which made them willing to spend their evenings, after their day's work was done, in studying books and then going out to the street corners to proclaim what they believed, and by their very intensity and earnestness pushed Socialism to the front and made it one of the great living issues of the day. I think the Church has a very great deal to learn from the enthusiasm and the earnestness of those who have propagated Socialistic views.

"With very rare exceptions, we do not see any real distinctions, any distinctive attitudes towards most of the ordinary matters and problems of everyday life which we have adopted because we are Christians. The early Christians did turn the world upside down. They were not satisfied with the ethics of the day, with its moral standard, with the relationship between men and women and classes, and so on, that existed. They would make a far stronger protest than we often do when there is the question of betting and gambling, about which some of us feel there can be no kind of compromise on the part of those who call themselves Christians."

And the Canon of Westminster concluded his address by saying, "If there were more distinctiveness of standpoint, more reality and enthusiasm, and more willingness to be unpopular amongst Christian people, we should find that the Church has still a great work to do and that her Master will help her in the doing of it."

What Christianity Proposes

Would not the world, improved even according to our too languid hopes and dreams, this world made better as a home for men even up to our poor imaginings of its improvement, be a world so different from that which we know that it would be by no hyperbole described as a world turned upside down? A world where, not by any outward constraint, but by moral impossibility, no man could covet to be wealthy at the price of his neighbor's loss; no man aspire to be the master of a fellow man's labor, or have power to curtail a fellow man's freedom; where no man could enjoy comfort at the price of other men's poverty or degradations; where no children could be driven by their parents' necessity or greed to work before their time; where education, the most fitting and the best, should be open to all; where money could purchase no man's vote or written opinion; where nothing but ability and integrity could raise a man to leadership and authority among his fellows; where all men felt the failures and crimes of their fellows in the community to be their common shame and labored to redeem their fallen brothers in love and sympathy; where among the nations there was a desire for mutual service, and an uncontentious rivalry to cultivate most of the treasures of the whole world's life in the arts of peace; a world where there were no preparations for war because no people could suspect another of any but righteous designs; a world where, in a word,

men believed in one another's brotherhood, without barrier, and rejoiced in it. I say, is that not a world reversed in all its thoughts and ways from the actual world to which the Christian gospel still presents its message?

To propose to make that world, is to have a revolutionary program indeed. But such is the proposal of Christianity. The revolution that Christ works begins with the revolution of a man, of you and me. That is the only point of departure—it was so from the beginning—for the revolution of collective human life. But there is no revolution in the world so great as that. To make unselfish, world-defying, self-abandoning, men and women of us! If Christ can do that he can do anything.

And yet some of us who think and speak of the need for revolution have never seen that it must begin there. Christ cannot make a new world with the same people who made up the old one. "Ye must be born again."

Christ, the son of God who came into the world to redeem it, whose name we bear, desires a revolution for the world, and we must desire it with him or we are no followers of his. He came to "turn the world upside down." We must desire that reversal of the world with a desire that burns up all selfish fears for our own privileges or comforts. The revolutionized world that Christ desires must leave the selfish man miserable and homeless. But let us see to it if we desire and pray for revolution that it is the revolution after Christ's own heart. No powers save those of love and patience will achieve it.—Condensed from an Article in The Christian Century, by H. C. Carter.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The devotion of the new converts to their leader.
2. Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who were some of the great men of Athens? 2. What interested Paul in the Athenians? 3. In what mood must Paul have left Athens? 4. In what respects was Corinth a difficult field for missionary work? 5. Can a modern city that is wholly corrupt be reformed? 6. How did Paul feel toward the Corinthians as he afterwards wrote them in 2 Cor. 11.24-33? 7. What letters did Paul write while at Corinth?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL, ORGANIZER OF CHURCHES

Beginning the Lesson

The modern name of ancient Thessalonica is Salonica. It is a beautiful old town nestling among the hills by the sea, with fortifications on the hills behind it. It was often pictured in the newspapers in illustrations from the scenes of battle during the Great War. At that time Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth wrote: "It would be interesting if I could show the British gunners today the path right between their guns where Paul and Silas, sore from the flogging at Philippi, came down that summer morning long ago into the town."

Paul's trade, you remember, was the making of cloth for tents, and he worked at this trade while in Thessalonica to earn money for his support, for he would not be a burden to anyone. Travelers today speak of hearing the creaking and straining of hand-looms in Salonica. These looms are similar to the one at which Paul sat and worked. Goat's hair is spun into coarse thread by the women and children as they sit at their cottage doors, and the thread is taken to the looms where it is woven into a thick, harsh cloth.

"It is only as I look closely into his life that I realize what a hero Paul was," writes Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth. "In the keen strain of clerical life I wonder how long I should stand it if I had to sit up at night to cut and stretch tent cloth to earn my breakfast—if I had a chronic disease—if I was persecuted and disliked—and if I varied the monotony by getting stoned or flogged once a year. It helps me to see how much a man can do who is intensely in earnest. It helps me to estimate how deep was this man's love of the Lord who had been so good to him on the Damascus Road. These months of study are helping me to appreciate and admire Paul as I never did before."

How Paul Organized the Church at Thessalonica

Paul went down on the Sabbath to the synagogue, and there he spoke to the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped with them.

As he stood up there near the dimly burning lamp, his eager face alive with desire that they should catch from him the light that he had, all could see that every word of Paul's burned with fiery conviction. But could it be true? they asked, that the Messiah had come. They had waited, now long!—through the centuries they had listened and looked for the coming of the King.

Now here was this astonishing traveler who had come post-haste across from their own native land to say that truly he, the One sent from God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had come. But how? That was the disturbing, unbelievable part of the story. He had suffered, had been condemned to death, and executed by the Roman Government. Was it likely that such a one was God's anointed Messiah? It was a stumbling-block to them. Yet Paul declared that he was the Christ, that he was proved to be so by the fact that God had raised him from death. Paul knew this (he said), for Christ had spoken to him on the road to Damascus.

So for Sabbath after Sabbath Paul spoke; and in the week the Greeks and Jews would come, while he was at work stitching his canvas, and would ask questions and argue with him. One by one and in increasing numbers they came to believe that what he said was true.

In Thessalonica, however, just as in Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, and Iconium, there were many Jews who thought that Paul's audacity in declaring that a man who had hung on the cross was the Son of God, and that he had come to the world for the love of the other nations as well as the Jews, was a blend of blasphemy and treason against the race.

They went around whispering to loungers at the street corners who were spoiling for a riot, and said: "These fellows who have come into the city are trying to break down the Roman rule and to put up a new king in the place of the Emperor."

Soon they had gathered a mob of ne'er-do-wells. "To the house of Jason" was the cry, for they knew that Paul and Silas lived there.

Jason heard the noise of a rabble coming down the street in which he lived. Looking out, he could see them filling the road and shouting, waving their hands in the air. Now they were actually stopping in front of his house. They were coming and battering at his door.

"We want Paul and Silas," they shouted, and attacked Jason's house to get at them; but neither of the two was in the house.

In disappointed rage they seized hold of Jason and some of the other Christians, and dragged them along to the rulers of the city, called the politarchs—or "city-chiefs." For Thessalonica was a free Roman city, and appointed its own rulers, not receiving prætors from Rome.

It was difficult in the confused howling of voices to hear what was really said. But the politarchs made one man come up and give a statement.

"These fellows who upset the whole world have come here to Thessalonica. Jason here"—and they pointed to him—"has welcomed them. They all break the decrees of Cæsar; for they say that someone else, named Jesus, is to be king."

A yell of patriotic rage went up. The politarchs were disturbed when they heard this. It was the awful cry that could be raised in the empire—this charge of treachery and rebellion against Cæsar. The Jews raised this charge against Jesus, and now against his pioneer missionary. But the rulers evidently felt that the matter would blow over most easily if they took easy measures. They, therefore, bound over Jason and the other brethren to keep the peace.

Those who followed Christ knew quite well that the Jews would start a more serious attack on Paul and Silas when they next appeared, and feared it might mean their being executed. They, therefore, persuaded the two that it would be better to leave the city till the fury of the Jews cooled.

The Brothers (as the early Christians called one another) could hardly wrench themselves away from Paul. But it must be done, for his sake and their own. The two comrades must leave that very night. Paul gave the Brothers at Thessalonica parting advice as they gathered in the darkening twilight.

We can imagine with what tense faces they would lean forward to listen to Paul, as he told them in very straight, strong words how the Lord Jesus wanted them to live. We know some of the things that he said, for he recalled them to the people in a letter that he wrote later.

You must keep clear from unclean living.
You should never play a fraud on your brother.
You will not need to be told to love one another; God himself tells you that.
Stick to your own task.

Work with your hands (and as he said it, Paul might almost unconsciously lift up his tough hands blackened with the day and night work on the heavy tent canvas), so that the outside world respect your straightness, and so that you can support yourselves.

We must be clad in a coat of mail, made of faith and love; and on our heads the helmet of the hope of salvation.

Keep a check on loafers.

Never lose your temper with anyone.

See that nobody pays back evil for evil.

But always make a point of being kind to one another and to all the world.

Rejoice all the time and never give up prayer.

Thank God for everything.

Between the hour after sunset when darkness rushes swiftly over the land, and the rising of the moon, Paul and Silas quietly escaped. They passed by the sentries at the west gate, without challenge, into the open road. The leagues of the Egnation Way stretched before them.

Silently they strode out along the road in the cool freshness of an early summer night. With the memory of the rods and the prison of Philippi in their hearts and the shouting of the frenzied mob of Thessalonica still in their ears, they went out, despised and rejected, each, like his Master, not "having where to lay his head."

They went, however, not through the east gate homeward to seek some quiet and refuge, but under the west gate out into the Road of Empire to take what new adventure should befall them.—Basil Mathews, in Paul the Dauntless.

How John G. Paton Turned the World Upside Down

One of the Christian missionaries who, like Paul, was trying to turn the world right side up, was Dr. John G. Paton. He tells in his Autobiography that once in the Island of Aniwa, where he labored for many years among a savage and heathen people, there had been no rain. So he resolved to dig a well in order to get water to drink. But the people had never seen such a thing as a well, and didn't know that water could be obtained from the ground. Consequently, when he told them his plans to go down into the earth for rain they thought that he had "gone wrong in his head." "What," they said, "are there clouds under the earth? Will the showers come up from below? No, Missi," they continued, "you will never see rain coming up from the earth. We expect you will drop through your hole into the sea and the sharks will eat you." But Dr. Paton labored on until at last he found good fresh water, having succeeded, you see, in turning a people's world upside down by bringing rain from clouds in the ground.

But on the next Sunday the Chief of the tribe, with a tomahawk in his hand, preached a sermon for Dr. Paton, declaring that "from this day we must believe all that Missi tells us concerning 'Jehovah God.'" Then the multitude brought their idols and destroyed them, and again a world was turned upside down. Instead of worshiping stones they knew of the Father-God who is also our God—Condensed from Wandering Stars, by Andrew Hansen.

Sentence Sermons

"Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

Try to comprehend as much as possible of this Book (the Bible) with your mind, and accept the rest on faith, and you will live and die a better man.—Lincoln.

There is no book that will so repay time spent on its pages as will the Word of God.—F. B. Meyer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read the account of Paul at Athens. 2. What was the result of Paul's preaching in Athens? 3. What did Paul say in his first letter to the Thessalonians about supporting himself by his own labor? 4. Do you think Paul's work as a preacher was more honorable than his work as a tent maker? 5. What great games were celebrated near Corinth? 6. What is the meaning of "reasoned and persuaded," verse 4? 7. What is the meaning of "was constrained," verse 5? 8. What did the act recorded in verse 6 signify? 9. What letters did Paul afterward write to Corinth?

PAUL IN ATHENS AND CORINTH

GOLDEN TEXT: For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2.2

LESSON Acts 17.6-18.17; 1 Corinthians 2.1-16; 1 Timothy 2.3-7

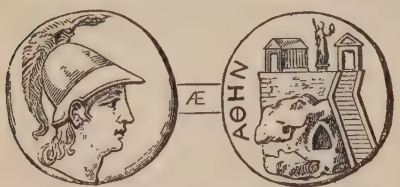
DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

ACTS 18.1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. 5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: 10 for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

I TIMOTHY 2.3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times; 7 whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL AT ATHENS, verse 1. After leaving Berœa, Paul went on to Athens, as we learned last week. There he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and preached in the market-place to all who would listen. Athens had a famous university and was the headquarters of the various philosophical schools; among them Luke mentions the Stoics and Epicureans; certain of whom encountered him and said, "What would this babbler say?" and others of whom said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods," because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. Parenthetically Luke observes, "Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Thus Luke explains the fact that Paul was taken to the Areopagus and asked to tell there what his new teaching was.



Coin of Athens
On the right is a representation of a flight of stairs leading to the Acropolis.

Paul addressed the waiting crowd. He referred to an inscription which he had seen on one of their altars—"To an Unknown God"—and said that the one whom they worshiped in ignorance he declared unto them. God who made the world does not dwell in temples, nor does he need anything, for he himself is the source of life and of all things. He made all nations brothers, he would have them all seek and find him, but he is not far from everyone, for in him each one lives. Being God's children, we ought not to think that our Father is like any image made by man. Their ignorance God had overlooked in the past, but now he calls them to change their views, for there will come a day when God will judge the world by One whom he has appointed, whom he has raised from the dead.

At the reference to the resurrection some of Paul's hearers mocked; others said that they would hear him again some time; and thus he was dismissed. Among those who believed his message were Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, but the shallow intellectualism and religious superstition of the people of Athens did not offer a promising soil for the Word, and Paul left Athens for Corinth.

"The Athenians left the discourse at the point of moral pressure. As long as Paul played the part of a Jewish Socrates, they were willing to hear him. But the moment Paul flamed into moral earnestness, left the intellectual plane and came down to struggle with the heart and question it with hard interrogation, then the Athenians mocked, or with partial civility nodded to him a promise that they might come again tomorrow. We say, 'We will come again tomorrow.' So we may, but Paul may not be there!" (Joseph Parker).

II. PAUL'S HOME AND MANUAL LABOR AT CORINTH, verses 2 and 3. The Jewish settlement in Rome began with the bringing of Jewish prisoners there by Pompey, and great numbers afterward arrived, attracted by the wealth and importance of the Imperial City. The Emperor Tiberius deported four thousand Jews to Sardinia, "in the hope that the malaria might kill them." Then Emperor Claudius was at first inclined to favor the Jews, in return for the aid which Herod Agrippa had given him in obtaining the throne, but, after the revolt from Roman rule of Jewish zealots of Judea, Claudius issued an edict ordering all Jews to leave Rome. According to Suetonius, the edict went forth because the Jews "were in a state of continual tumult at the instigation of one Chrestus." It is supposed that the Romans, hearing the name *Chrestus, Christos* (Christ) so often, took it to be that of the leader of the Roman Jews. Among those who were thus forced to leave Rome were Aquila and Priscilla, husband and wife. They settled in Corinth, and on his arrival Paul made his home with them.

Whether they were followers of Christ before Paul knew them, or whether they were won to the faith by their lodger's conversation and life, we do not know. They, like Paul, were tent-makers, and all three worked together at their trade. They knew Paul as a workman, not only as a preacher; they knew his private life, knew him in his offtimes, and as long as Paul lived they remained his loyal friends.

See the reason for his manual labor which Paul gives in 1 Thess. 2.9; Acts 20.34, 36. So Cary said, "My business is preaching the gospel; I cobble shoes to pay expenses."

"There is some difference of opinion as to the meaning of 'tent-maker,' and we should like to know whether Paul sat at his work as a weaver, or stood at a table as an upholsterer, or cut out at a table and moved about the floor putting the tent together. In Corinth, as a place much concerned with travel, there would be a steady market for tents." (A. S. Peake).

"No man is born into the world whose work
Is not born with him; there is always work
And tools to work withal, for those who will;
And blessed are the horny hands of toil" (Lowell).

III. PREACHING TO THE JEWS AT CORINTH, verses 4-6. As usual, Paul addressed himself first to the Jews, and in the synagogue every Sabbath he persuaded, or, as the marginal rendering is, sought to persuade, Jews and Greeks to accept his message concerning the Savior.

Silas and Timothy, you remember, had remained at Berœa, and when Paul reached Athens he sent for them to "come to him with all speed" (Acts 17.14-16). They joined him at Corinth, and on their arrival Paul was able to give more time to preaching, since they brought money with them (2 Cor. 11.5; Phil. 4.15) and there was less need for his toiling at tent-making. Accordingly, he "was constrained by the word," the word had him in its grip, he yielded to the urge within him, and proclaimed more zealously than ever that Jesus is the Christ.

"The desolate and mournful days of a minister in the full tide of his work are the days when nothing grips him, and when he has to talk without any living word. And his anxious days are when he goes here and there seeking for a word which will lay hold of him. And his great days are the days when, in his study or his thinking, or his pastoral labor, some word starts up and lays hold of him, takes possession of him, and bears him joyously and wonderingly along, compelling him to be its witness and advocate; when he is, moreover, surrendered to his message and swayed by it, as they tell me a writer of fiction sometimes is by the character he has created, or which has demanded to be created" (Charles Brown).

The Jews rejected Paul's message. They "opposed themselves" (literally, "set themselves in battle array") and blasphemed. As Matthew Henry well says, "They

could not argue against it, but what was wanting in reason they made up in language."

Then Paul shook out his garment, indicating by this gesture that the fault lay with them, he was blameless, and said, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean"—you alone are responsible for your failure to accept the Christ. Compare a similar symbolic act of Paul's at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13.51), and compare Neh. 5.13 and Mt. 27.24, 25. Seeing they thrust it from them (Acts 13.46), he then declared his intention of turning to the Gentiles.

IV. PREACHING TO THE GENTILES IN CORINTH, verses 7-11. Paul left the synagogue and preached in the house of Titus Justus (a Gentile proselyte), which adjoined the synagogue. (We need not suppose that he changed his place of abode from the home of Aquila and Priscilla.) The very fact that Paul now preached near the synagogue, but took no part in the synagogue services, made the dissension more noticeable. Professor Ramsay thinks that Titus Justus was evidently a Roman citizen, one of the *coloni* in Corinth, and thus Paul would gain access through him to the more educated class in the city. Paul's preaching had not been without its effect upon the Jews, for Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and many of the Corinthians believed Paul's message and were baptized. Crispus is mentioned in Acts 1.14 as one of the first converts baptized by Paul, together with Gaius and Stephanas. "I thank God," Paul later wrote to the Corinthians (1.14, 16) "that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

We call our great missionary "Paul the Dauntless," and rightly, but here at Corinth he had a time of depression. He was anxious about the steadfastness of the converts in Macedonia, as his letter to the Thessalonians shows; he had missed at first the sympathy and assistance of Silas and Timothy; his work at Athens had been productive of little result; the city of Corinth was renowned for its wickedness, and this must have overburdened his heart; and his bodily strength was depleted. Evidently his mission seemed to him a failure just then, just as Elijah's had to Elijah, and there, like Elijah, he was reassured and comforted. In a vision at night, these words came to him from the Lord: "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee." "We read Paul's condition in the words which were spoken to him. His courage was oozing out. 'Don't be afraid!' said the Lord. He was wondering whether it were worth while to go on. 'Go on!' said the Lord. He was afraid that the Jews were going to trap and kill him. 'Nobody is going to hurt you,' said the Lord. In that night Paul became convinced that his fears were groundless and that there was still work for him to do."

"It was necessary that Paul be rescued again and again. Like the rest of us, he was repeatedly meeting situations which were too much for his strength. The Paul who serenely discourses on Predestination and Foreordination is like a God seated on a philosophic Olympus. We cannot come where he is. But the Paul who is so badly frightened that he is in a tremble, who becomes emotionally so upset that he cannot get his mind on his work, who sometimes feels so blue that he cannot even preach the gospel, who falls into sloughs of despond and flounders there until God pulls him out, is a man whose pulse beat helps us because we feel sure that he is our brother. The world will forever need the encouragement of a man who felt the agony of fear and overcome it, who fell into the pit of despondency and climbed out again, who was defeated and became discouraged, but pressed steadily on" (Charles E. Jefferson).

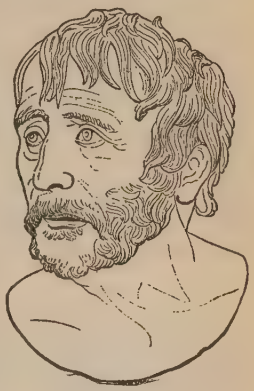
"For I have much people in this city," were the comforting words with which the voice in Paul's vision ended. Do they not recall the words which Elijah heard when he thought that he, and he only, was left of God's people: "I have yet seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee unto Baal"? Athens' religious life was slight; Corinth's was corrupt. Athens was idolatrous; Corinth was sensual. But they were "God's towns, after all."

"'I have much people in this city.' That was the word of the Lord spoken in the inner sanctuary of the spirit life of his servant concerning a corrupt city. He knew that throughout the city, notwithstanding its obscenity and its corruption, there was a spirit of inquiry, a spirit of eagerness, a spirit of wistfulness. He knew that when his great evangel was proclaimed there many heard and responded" (Morgan).

"It is easy to read a whole city down to the level of the audacious vices which characterize some of its citizens, but just when Corinth, or Rome, or London, or Chicago is seen in the lurid light of its vices, the conviction is borne in upon the man who really sees deeply and understands, that God has much people in these cities" (Lynn Harold Hough).

V. PAUL BROUGHT BEFORE GALLIO, verses 12-17. Paul remained in Corinth a year and a half. During this time he continued his preaching and wrote two letters to the Thessalonians, the first of his letters which we possess.

We all know Seneca, the tutor of Nero and the most eminent Latin writer of his time. Now here in The Acts it is most interesting to learn of a meeting between Gallio, the older brother of Seneca, and Paul. When Gallio became proconsul of Achaia, the Jews were united in their hostility to Paul and "with one accord rose up against him" and brought him before Gallio, charging him with persuading men to worship God contrary to law. Had it been a question of wrong or villainy, Gallio told them, he would have considered it, but he was not minded to be a judge in a matter "about words and names and Jewish law"—they could look to that themselves. Then he drove them away from the judgment-seat. In their anger they seized upon Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him; but Gallio paid no heed to them.



Bust of Seneca, Brother of Gallio

VI. A SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL WHICH PAUL PREACHED, 1 Timothy 2.1-7. Paul exhorts Timothy to have prayers made for all men; this, he says, is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. Then there follows a summary of what Paul was wont to preach, which he introduced by the statement of his great Catholic belief that God loves all and longs for the salvation of all: "he would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

And what were the main facts of Paul's gospel message? That there is one God, and that there is one Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, who was himself man, who gave himself a ransom for all.

This gospel message was the theme of testimony among men, Paul adds. "The testimony was to be borne in its own times"; by the apostles in their time and by Paul himself in his time. And then to make it plain that he himself rightly bore a part in the testimony of which he was speaking, Paul emphatically declared—"I speak the truth, I lie not"—that he had been appointed a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He found a certain Jew named Aquila with his wife; and he came unto them and because he was of the same trade he abode with them, and they wrought, Acts 18.1-3. In Alexandria the different trades sat in the synagogue arranged into guilds; and Paul could have no difficulty in meeting in the bazaar of his trade with the like-minded Aquila and Priscilla, with whom to find a lodging.—Alfred Edersheim.

He was of the same trade, Acts 18.3. As it was often enjoined upon a son not to forsake the trade of his father, perhaps from respect, perhaps because a similar trade might be more easily learnt at home, it is likely that Paul followed his father's trade, which both father and son might easily have learnt at Tarsus.—Schürer, in Jewish People.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What was Paul's trade? Why was he taught a trade? Where have we heard of his supporting himself by his trade? Where did Paul shake the dust from off his feet? What did that gesture signify? By what symbolic act did Pilate signify that he deemed himself free from responsibility in the death of Christ? Where was it that Paul said since the Jews thrust the gospel from them he would turn to the Gentiles?

The First Epistle to Timothy

See The Pastoral Epistles, in our Introduction.

Corinth

Turn to your map and study the country of Greece. Notice the narrow isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the mainland, separating the Saronic Gulf (of the Ægean Sea) from the Gulf of Corinth (of the Adriatic). Then notice the location of Corinth, dominating the isthmus; "The City of the Two Seas," it was poetically called. It is about fifty miles from Athens to Corinth. There was no canal across the isthmus in Paul's day, though Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, and Caligula had all considered the project, and Nero, at the very time of our lesson, had begun the undertaking, though he soon gave it up. Boats were dragged the four miles across the isthmus to avoid the stormy passage around the peninsula.

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and the seat of the Roman proconsul. It was destroyed in 146 B. C. by the Romans and was rebuilt a century later by Julius Cæsar. It was the glory of Greece in Paul's day. The great rock of Acrocorinthus towers above the plain on which Corinth was situated. Only a few columns of a Greek temple now mark the site of the city.

Of the people of Corinth Dummelow writes: "The morals of the Corinthians, who were devoted to pleasure and the worship of Venus, were such as to outrage even pagan sentiment. Allusions to the prevailing sensuality of the city, which was encouraged by its religion, are to be found in the Epistles to the Corinthians."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul knew what he taught. The subject matter of his teaching had been crystalized into his life by a unique experience. The focal center of his education was the Hebrew Bible. He had mastered it. All his knowledge centered in or radiated from it. His experience on the road to Damascus had precipitated a Person into that center. Henceforth, for Paul, Christ was the heart of all life and all education.

"Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

He went forth teaching a knowledge which he had received at first hand. He knew not only about it, he knew it! (Phil. 3.8-11). This he evidenced by the ring of conviction and authority in his speech; by his ability to quote from memory and to relate historic facts to each other in their true perspective as he spoke (Acts 13.16-22); by his claim to interpret those facts correctly; by his continual reference to the great characters of the Old Testament; by his knowledge of Christ which he claimed had come to him directly in a personal experience, divine in its origin, personal to himself, and effectual. He knew whereof he spoke!—Howard Tillman Kuist, in The Pedagogy of St. Paul.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL, PREACHER AND TEACHER

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

Paul, Preacher and Teacher

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." In these words written by Paul to the church which he founded at Corinth we have the passion of his life, the purpose of all his preaching and teaching. He lived to win men to Christ by speaking and writing.

We have several condensed fragments of his addresses in The Acts, notably that in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13.17-41); to the Athenians on Mars Hill (Acts 17.22-31); to the elders of the Ephesian Church at Miletus (Acts 20.18-35); to the mob of Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 22.3-21); to Felix (Acts 24.10-21); and to Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26.2-23). And in his words to Timothy which are a part of our lesson text we have a succinct summary of the message which he everywhere delivered.

In the words of Dr. Robert E. Speer, "Paul was propagating truth. He was the servant of a cause. It is the man who is possessed by a message and whom a cause consumes who can sway men, facing them dauntlessly. Paul spoke forth with positive assurance, and the heart of man, always timid and yet admiring bravery, hesitant yet desiring certainty, turned to him and rested upon his great, rugged faith.

"He was no theorizer, no calm, academic philosopher. He was an apostle, a propagandist, a missionary. He had experienced what he offered. He was a witness to things he knew personally, and he had a work which God had given him personally to do. He told of what he had felt and done and knew. His speeches and letters are full of the urgent and intimate personal note. Yet even when he says "I," it is not Paul that we see, but the Christ in whom Paul was and whom Paul preached. It was this selfless personalization of Christianity which made his preaching so powerful.

"He had thought out his message. He was a reasoner (Acts 18.20). He meditated with a persistent mind upon the gospel and was possessed by it entirely. He had it logically stated to his own thought and he was ever ready to proclaim and defend it."

Why Paul's Preaching Failed at Athens

The Christian propaganda failed or prospered in proportion as the fresh data for religion present in Jesus were studiously concealed or openly proclaimed. Paul's address at Athens says some fine things: God's spirituality, not a God afar off—one in whom we live and move; creation instead of chaos; Providence instead of chance; men of one blood instead of proud distinction between Greek and Barbarian. But at no point is publicity given to the distinctive Christian message. In this studied omission of the cross is the secret of the comparative failure at Athens and the subsequent change at Corinth. Paul writes penitently, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The gospel had lost its savor when it was merged in Jewish common place.—Hugh Mackintosh, in The Originality of the Christian Message.

Why Paul's Preaching Succeeded at Corinth

It looks as if Paul's preaching in Corinth was specially characterized by greater concentration of purpose and simplicity of method: compare 1 Cor. 2.2. The philosophic style in which he had addressed the Athenians he now abandoned. In Corinth "Jesus Christ and him crucified" was to be preached as the power of God and the wisdom of God, and in both his epistles to the Corinthians all that the apostle says about the duties of the Christian life is brought into relation with this fundamental truth.—The Expositor's Greek Testament.

"I Have Much People in This City"

Said Christ in the days of his public ministry: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring." Paul was finding some of them in Corinth. The most hopeful things in humanity today are its restlessness, its intensity, its disgust. These are open doors for the Christian preacher. Corinthian habits, Corinthian words, and all the restlessness of the city, it matters not how it is manifested, create the open door for the evangel of Jesus Christ. What is the gospel for the corrupt city? The Cross and the Resurrection, and none other. Are we at his disposal, as this man was at his disposal in Corinth? If so, he is at our side, and we need not fear the success or the hostility or the vastness of the work; but be content to do that piece of work which God has given to us, in the consciousness of our fellowship with him, and his fellowship with us. As we look and serve, let us look for saints, remembering that he is saying to us in the midst of all that tends to dishearten, "I have much people in this city." Let us look for them, find them, and lead them to him.—G. Campbell Morgan, in The Acts of the Apostles.

Paul Preached that Jesus Is the Christ

Do you believe that a message like that will really appeal to the sin and sorrow of London, or Corinth, or Chicago, or any other place? David Livingstone tells us in his diary how when he was traveling in South Africa with savages, foul as savages are, and he alone, a white man, sick and in danger among them, he loved to preach to them about the passion of the great Mediator.

Fancy speaking to people like that about the sufferings of Jesus Christ! He goes on, "It warms my own heart." That told. Those men realized the great man; savages as they were, they realized that, and the message was part of what they realized. Do you and I believe that people will respond? Shall we give ourselves to know Jesus Christ, to think oftener about him? May I urge you to think of Paul in Corinth, of Livingstone in South Africa, and to recall oftener for yourselves and for those about you the life of the great Mediator, Jesus Christ and him crucified?—T. R. Glover.

For Discussion

1. The duty of missionaries, like Paul at Athens, to trace as far as they can the

leading of God in the religions of the people among whom they labor. See The Christ of the Indian Road, by E. Stanley Jones.

2. Modern cities which, like Athens, are especially hospitable to new religions.

3. The blessing of work. See The Joy of Work, by Maltbie D. Babcock; Work, by Hugh Black.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the occasion for Paul's writing this letter to the Church at Corinth? 2. Where was Paul when the letter was written? 3. How many letters did Paul write to the Corinthians? See 1 Cor. 5.9. 4. Who was Apollos? (Acts 18.24-28). 5. Who were the "budding sectarians," as Dr. Jowett calls them? 6. How may differences of opinion help rather than hinder our work? 7. How may divisions among Christians be lessened? 8. What is the next step toward Christian unity? 9. Explain 3.21-23. 10. Even if we don't own a foot of ground, in what sense is the beauty of the world ours? 11. In what sense is Jesus the foundation, 3.11?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL AS A WORKER

Beginning the Lesson

Read to your class the graphic account of Paul's challenge to Corinth, Chapter XXIV of Basil Mathews' Paul the Dauntless.

Paul the Manual Laborer

A young man came to visit the monk Marcarius and found him weaving a mat. "What!" exclaimed the youth, "do you work for food that perishes?" The monk did not answer him but handed him a book and bade him read. Noon came, and instead of being invited as a guest to eat the young man was told that in the cloister the apostolic rule held good—"If any will not work, neither let him eat."

That was the rule which the apostle Paul wrote from Corinth to the church at Thessalonica. What work was he himself doing in Corinth at that time? The same hand that wrote so many of the New Testament Epistles was filled with goats' hair which he was weaving into a coarse cloth for tents. Who were his companions in the work?

Paul the Writer

One day something very pleasant happened at Corinth. Paul looked up from his tentmaking to see Silas and Timothy standing at the door. News at last from Salonika (Thessalonica)! And it is delightful news that Timothy brings. "They are unshaken in their faith. They are making fine progress. The heathen are impressed by them. And they have the kindliest feelings for you, Paul. They are most affectionate about you and are longing to see you again." It was a great delight to Paul. "I live again," he says, "when ye stand fast in the Lord."

"Of course," Timothy said, "it is not all rose-colored. Some have fallen back. A. and B. and the old sailorman C. have been drinking badly. Those three girls near the city gate have gone back on the street. And there is another thing I do not like. There is rather unwholesome excitement about the second coming of Christ that keeps the people restless and disinclined for quiet work. And death has been busy with the little congregation. Our old friend on the hill has lost his wife."

I see Timothy telling the news. I watch the eagerness of Paul and the quick changes on his face as he listens.

"O Timothy, I wish I could go to them this moment! But I cannot with this growing congregation so eager in Corinth. Look here, go down to the artist's shop in the next street and buy sheets of papyrus. We will write them a letter."

That was a happy thought for the world. Thus began the most important stage in Paul's great life work. Thus began the making of the New Testament.

Perhaps you do not all know that the New Testament began with the writing of the Epistles. And that Paul began it that day in the shabby little workshop of Aquila, the tentmaker.

It was the year 50 A. D., seventeen years after the Crucifixion. There was no Bible except the Old Testament. Not a page of our Gospels was written yet, nor for nearly twenty years afterwards. It is a curious fact. One would have expected that the first thing Christians would do after Pentecost would be to go to the apostles and say to

them, Write us down in a book at once everything that you have seen and heard and learned about Jesus in those wonderful three years. But they did not; you see, they were not accustomed to books. They did not want books. Most of them could not read. Their whole training had been oral. Their knowledge of a thing had always come by hearsay. There were no newspapers. When there was any news somebody told it.

So the first Christian writings were the Epistles of St. Paul, and first of them all was this letter to the Thessalonians, called forth by the simple necessities of the moment. God's ways are not our ways. We should probably expect the Christian Bible to begin with solemn, formal, logically written books. But God knows best. We believe that the Holy Spirit was inspiring Paul. And we believe that he guided him to write, not formal treatises, but simple, natural, unconventional letters such as we should write ourselves today to our soldier boys in this same Salonika.—Condensed from The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters, by J. Paterson Smyth.

The Joy of Work

George announced to his father his decision not to go to college (as told in an interesting story), because getting ready for the entrance examinations would mean too much work. He was idling over a school book as he spoke.

"What will you do instead?" questioned his father.

"Oh, go to work somewhere," George carelessly replied, as though that meant ready money and easy times.

His father reminded him that going to work would mean early rising, long hours, and remaining an errand boy or a porter or, at most, a clerk on small pay, unless he worked harder than he had yet done at school.

George sighed dismally. "It's work, work, work everywhere, and I hate work!"

His father turned upon him sharply. "If you forget everything else I have ever told you," he said, "at least remember what I tell you now: The man who hates work goes through life with a ball and chain dragging after him. He has a curse upon him that blasts his life. The hoboes and the tramps are haters of work. Sneak-thieves and thugs and worse are haters of work. So are most of the men at the bottom of the industrial scale. They hated work, and dodged it, and slighted what they had to do, and did just enough to hold their jobs, and they stay at the bottom, hating work still!"

Suddenly his father's tone changed. "When we saw the football game at Cambridge last year," he asked, "do you remember the inscription on the stadium, 'Dedicated to the joy of manly contest'? Learn that 'joy of manly contest' with hard work, my boy! Don't run away from work, George! Don't be afraid of it! Meet it bravely, with the joy of manly contest in your heart, and day by day you will begin to find the struggle good, and out of it will come one of the supremely great and enjoyable things of life!"

George sat quiet for a time. Then his jaw closed with a snap. "I'm going to begin right now," he said, "and I'm going to know what this chapter's about!"

Sentence Sermons

Wherever one is, there is room for doing good.—Seneca.

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.—Roosevelt.

Working clothes worthily worn are as heroic as khaki.—W. L. Watkinson.

"You're busy? Chipmunks darting in and out
The wall are busy, too—but what about?"

"Enthusiasm sets the embers glowing,
But only work can keep the fire going."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Who had founded the church at Corinth? 2. Who were Apollos and Cephas? (Bible dictionary.) 3. What did the Corinthians mean when they said, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos"? 4. What did Paul mean by his questions of verse 13? 5. In what words did Paul say that the Christian workers at Corinth were brave workers? 6. Give his words that declare they were in partnership with God. 7. How did Jesus express the fact that we are working together with him, as told in John 15? 8. What does Jesus tell us about the importance of a good foundation? (Mt. 7.)

PAUL WRITES TO HIS FRIENDS IN CORINTH

GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133.1

LESSON 1 Corinthians 1-4 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 4.1-6

I CORINTHIANS 1.10 Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them *that are of the household* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?

3.5 What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. 6 I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

21 Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. EXHORTATION TO UNITY, 1 Corinthians 1.10-13. Through members of the household of Chloe, Paul learned that there were contentions among the members of the church at Corinth. It has been inferred that Chloe was a business woman of Ephesus who had sent slaves to Corinth in the pursuance of her trade, and that on the return of the latter they had brought back this news to Paul, who was then at Ephesus. If they had belonged to Corinth, it is argued, Paul would hardly have exposed them to reprisals by this disclosure in his letter. After his salutation and words of thanksgiving (verses 1-9) Paul takes up this report and appeals to his readers to be of one mind. "I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus," he wrote—a name which should be a reminder to them of their oneness as his disciples—"that ye all speak the same thing," that you agree in calling Christ your Leader, "and that there be no divisions among you."

A sadly needed bit of counsel this for our day! It is said that in one of the great cities of England a quarrel arose among the firemen, and at the first fire which they were to fight instead of putting out the flames they turned the hose on one another. This is a picture of what many Christian groups are doing today. The remedy is given by the Persian poet Sa'di:

If the litigious knew the taste
Of friendship with the Friend,
Think you that their life would waste
In quarrels without end?

"That ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment," continued Paul.

"Nothing doth so much keep men out of the church and drive men out of the church, as breach of unity" (Bacon).

There were three parties in the church at Corinth, Paul had learned, which were called by the name of the leader which each admired the most and regarded as most important: the adherents of Paul, those of Apollos and those of Cephas, or Peter. Then there was also the party "of Christ," which may have arisen as a protest against calling any man the leader of the church. To use the name of Christ as a watchword of a party must have seemed a terrible thing to Paul.

"Is Christ divided?" Paul questioned. Is Christ made a part of the whole instead of the whole? By this question Paul expresses his horror at the thought of de-

grading Christ to the level of his human messengers. "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" he continues. By the crucifixion of Christ they were saved, by baptism they were dedicated to Christ's service; it was inconceivable that they could put others on a level with Christ.

One may say, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos; but let neither forget that both Paul and Apollos are disciples of Christ, and remember the words of Christ himself: "I pray for them; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us."

II. THE DISTINCTIVE WORK OF GOD AND HIS FELLOW-LABORERS, 1 Corinthians 3.5-9. "What, then, is Apollos and what is Paul? Only ministers, servants, through whom ye believed." We recall Christ's words in John 13: "A servant is not greater than his Lord." And each has only the abilities which the Lord gave to him. In the twelfth chapter of this letter Paul speaks of the special talents and ambitions of different workers in the church, and emphasizes the fact that all are members of one body, working for one end.

"I planted"—Paul had founded the church at Corinth, "Apollos watered"—Apollos had preached there with eloquence and fervor (Acts 18.27); "but God gave the increase"—to God alone was due the growth in numbers and in individual grace and knowledge.

"So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase": these words again emphasize the thought that it is the Great Giver of Life through whose power the seed matures, the spirit quickens and grows. Both he that planteth and he that watereth are one as having a common aim, the preaching of Christ and the spread of the Kingdom. Each should be concerned with the faithfulness of his work and leave in God's hands the reward. The figure here of the seed planted and watered and yielding fruit recalls Jesus' parables of the Kingdom. Paul was a city boy, born and bred; this figure from country life was unusual with him.

"We do well to honor our leaders, John Wyclif, John Huss, John Calvin, John Robinson, John Wesley—these were planters and husbandmen, giving great service. But they were what they were by the grace and endowment of God. And if God had not been behind their message, if God had not quickened the seed, where should we have been? After all, what and who is the greatest of preachers apart from God? These great and good men were one, brothers in a holy calling, and not jealous of one another, but humble instructors in the hands of the Lord; and each of them has received the blessing of the Father, and his gracious reward. The preacher is not greater than his message, nor is he lord over those to whom he preaches. They honor him in coöperation with God—not in equality, for they are servants, he only is Lord. Let us honor them, but let us honor the Master more. If in time of controversy our fathers gave them undue reverence, let us correct the fault. Honor your leaders, but gather together around the one only and eternal Lord and Master" (John Gardner).

"For we are God's fellow-laborers." By this Paul probably means sharers with God in his work, but possibly also (so A. S. Peake) colleagues who belong to God. In the last verse of the Gospel of Mark we read: "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word." This conception of our work as a work in partnership with God is one of the most ennobling.

"Christians are the only agents God has for carrying out his purposes. Think of that! He could himself with a single breath cleanse the whole of New York or the whole of London, but he does not do it" (Henry Drummond).

III. THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE FELLOW-LABORERS, verses 10, 11. Again Paul stresses the fact that his success as "a wise master builder" was due to the grace of God alone. The foundation which he used was Jesus Christ—"for other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"—and another (Apollos) had built thereon; the building erected upon this foundation must be carefully, prayerfully erected.

This brings home to all teachers their great responsibility. Let us not build a cheap and flimsy structure on such a noble foundation.

The great importance of the foundation of all character is much in Paul's mind. Perhaps he remembered the words of Jesus: "The rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rocks" (Mt. 7.25).

"Faith in Christ a Savior and willing submission to his influence are the foundation on which Christian character must be built" (Dummelow).

IV. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN OWNS, 3.21-23. In the verses omitted in our printed text Paul has been remarking that the greatest of teachers are not infallible, "for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and he concludes, "Wherefore let no one glory in men." "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul?" he has questioned earlier in the letter, and he has answered his own question: "Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him." God is the Giver of all things; and all things are yours through him. All things are yours if you are Christ's. "All things belong to the wise," said Zeno; "all things are mine," said Seneca. "Some of the more philosophical at Corinth may have made this a kind of watchword. Paul endorses it, but redeems it by the reminder that while all things belong to the Christian, he belongs in his turn to Christ" (A. S. Peake). Recall Paul's use of a Greek poet's saying in his sermon at Athens, Acts 17.28.

What did Paul have? He said he had suffered the loss of all things: that he had nothing. Yet he here makes an astounding claim: "All things are yours"—"all things are mine." And he goes on to particularize: "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," thus saying to the "budding sectarians," as Dr. Jowett calls them, "You do not belong to Peter, Peter belongs to you, and so also do Apollos and Paul!" "Whatever they have that is worth having, whatever gift of God is theirs, whatever they have of vision and truth and hope and love, is intended to be your minister, and you are prepared to grow rich by drawing upon the varied and ample stores of their wealth."

"Here are two men, one a Roman Catholic and the other a Friend. I look at one, and see him laying grave and awful emphasis upon the sacraments; I look at the other, and I see that in his thoughts and practises the sacraments have no emphasis at all. "All things are yours," whether Newman or Whittier. Their wealth is purposed to be the minister of my enrichment, and from their gold I am intended to mint the currency of my own spiritual commerce and communion. St. Francis of Assisi; and General Booth; St. François de Sales and Jonathan Edwards; Horace Bushnell and Charles Spurgeon; David Brainerd and Dwight Moody. I own them all, and I will work the deep mines of their life in the sure expectancy that I shall find 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'" (J. H. Jowett).

"Or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Everything contributes to the good of a Christian—all teachers, all experiences of life, death—which is the opening of a door into new life—all blessings which are to come.

Here again Dr. J. H. Jowett is a rich commentator:

"Things present are mine. All the things which are found about me now, and which belong to this stage and standard of our existence; all the things which seem so like our masters, are not our masters, but our servants, if we belong to Christ. Then difficulty is mine, and it is given me to strengthen my muscles and to invigorate my will. 'All things are yours . . . things present.'

"'And things to come!' They are yours, all the things that are to be, the things of the riper days, the things of the later stages, the things of the higher standards, the things that are to be in worlds unknown—enlarged capacities, inconceivable bliss, ineffable peace, incorruptible joy, perfect vision, unlimited fellowship, the unveiled glory, our eternal home. 'Things to come are yours.'

"In Christ we are unspeakably rich, for all these things are ours—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, things present, things to come. And here is the one condition by which we can begin to seize our inheritance. If all things are to be ours, then we must be Christ's. If Christ owns us, then we shall move among them like kings and queens. And through all

the changing scenes of life we shall be gathering the heavenly treasures which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and which thieves cannot break through nor steal!"

Then Paul speaks of the oneness of Christ and God, and brings all followers of Christ into the same fellowship: "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." "Christ belongs to God, not as God's creation, but as God's Son" (Theodoret). Compare Christ's words about the vine and the branches, in John 15.

"Life is not like an ocean steamship, divided by water-tight bulkheads into different sections, in one of which we do our work, and in the other of which we say our prayers. Either the whole of a man is religious, or none of him. A departmentalized, ecclesiasticized, provincialized religion is the first evidence of a decadent church. A distinguished American politician in a heated campaign is said to have telegraphed to his friend: "Claim everything." That, in a much profounder sense, is precisely the summons which Christianity makes on life. All things are yours. The whole of life is holy. Religion is not a province, but an empire. It comprehends both the church and the world, both life and death, both the present and the future. The world is one, and all of it is sacred and it is all yours, if ye are Christ's, as Christ is God's" (F. G. Peabody).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

How was Christian unity secured at the Council in Jerusalem? What does that incident teach about the best way of attaining Christian unity when opinions differ?

The First Epistle to the Corinthians

See our Introduction.

The Reason for Paul's Exhortation to Christian Unity

As we learned last week, Paul founded the church at Corinth and labored there for a year and a half. Some time after his departure Apollos came to Corinth from Ephesus and preached, and his eloquence captured many of his hearers. It is not known whether Peter (Cephas) had ever been in Corinth or not, but there was always in Corinth a group who followed a more narrow Judaistic form of Christianity, whose members looked to Peter as their leader. Others ranged themselves under Paul's name, yet others under that of Christ. The church became divided, and when news of this reached Paul he wrote from Ephesus this letter in the first four chapters of which he urged the members of the church to forget their differences in remembering their great Master.

For Corinth, see the last lesson.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

A British preacher, in discussing verse twelve of our text, dwells upon pupils' indebtedness to their religious teachers, and recalls with a touch of scorn a suggestion made that preachers and teachers should be "paid by results." He objects to that mode of payment because he does not wish to become a millionaire! "'Paid by results,' how the money would roll in upon us!" he exclaims. "To speak the word at a critical moment which shall turn a faltering young man into the path of life—how much for that? To utter thoughts which widen and purify a man's soul, and which save him from lapsing into a sordid life—how much for that? To inspire with fresh hope one sinking into grief and unbelief and despair—how much for that? Let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way saves a soul from death and hides a multitude of sins—how much for that? No, no, not payment by results here, at any rate. That must be left to the Great Paymaster."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL PLEADS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Beginning the Lesson

We hear much in these days about world peace. We have seen the waste of life, time, effort and resources caused by war, and we know the beauty, harmony and effectiveness of a world where men love one another and work together in peace.

So in many a group, even in many a church group, there is similar waste of time and effort in dissensions. We may differ in ideas and methods, but we should agree in our aim. If all are working for the Kingdom of God, there will be room for all. As men fix their minds more and more upon their goal, they ignore the unimportant differences of beliefs and customs.

Let us see what Paul has to say about this matter. Our text today is one which may profitably be examined verse by verse. What was the situation among the members of the church at Corinth which led Paul to exhort them to Christian unity? Follow with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

Ruins of a Temple on the Site of Corinth

We May Learn from All Great Teachers of Whatever Denomination

These four sects—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ-ians—were mutually exclusive; they accepted the special truth represented by their leader and ignored the rest. In opposition to this, Paul declares that all the great teachers belong to the whole church. The members of the church are not to shut themselves up to any one minister, but to get light and blessing out of them all, even as God hath given to every man. It has been said that an intellectual man ought to have preferences, but no exclusions; the Christian may have sundry preferences, but he ought to get light from all who can give it. He must recognize the special truths insisted upon by philosophy on the one side and by theology on the other. He must be willing to receive light from all pulpits. He must joyfully concede the preciousness of the work of evangelization wrought by the several denominations. Why should we shut ourselves up to one meadow when the whole land is ours; to one tree when the forest is ours; to one constellation when the whole firmament is ours?—W. L. Watkinson, in Noonday Addresses.

It Is not Uniformity that Is Wanted, but Unity

One of the hardest things in the world is to recognize merit and value in those who disagree with us. This is particularly difficult in religious issues, since religion usually is manifested in strong personal convictions. And it is always difficult for men with strong personal convictions to leave room for the convictions of other people. The instinct to set oneself up as the ultimate standard to which all others must conform is almost irresistible.

And yet when we face the facts of life we discover that there is almost always more than one way of approaching the same spiritual purpose. There is, for example, the way of the formal and literalistic type of mind, and there is that of the poetical and symbolical type. The presentation of the same truth to these two types will necessarily differ, and so will its embodiment. Why not? And why

should not each recognize the independent rights of the other? It is not uniformity that the world needs, but unity.—Henry van Dyke, in Light My Candle.

The Creeds

The Creeds were written many centuries ago, when man's intellectual background differed materially from the intellectual background of today. They can only continue vital as their language receives, as it has received through the ages, perpetual reinterpretation, progressively meeting the growing demands of man's growing knowledge of the world in which he lives.

Let us keep our heads, and our Christianity, and our Creeds too (if we may) just as they stand. For these ancient statements bind the Church of today with the Church of former generations, and with the Christianity of the New Testament. But if we insist on interpreting them with hard literalness, we shall become instigators of sectarianism ("accessories before the fact"), and we shall make our Creeds an inevitable source of dissension and disunion.

It is an honor to any man to hold strong convictions and to defend them. But it is not an honor to any man to be everlastingly justifying himself and condemning others. He who loves truth may class himself as a conservative or a liberal. But even if he considers himself a radical, if he does care for truth and desire it, he will be humble before its vastness and its mystery. He will be prepared to find out that he has been mistaken, or that another has discovered some aspect of the truth that he himself had overlooked.

Why look forward to a time when all shall come around to one way of thinking? The whole truth always transcends the portion of it which is visible at any one time to any one person or party. There will always be doctrinal differences. There will never be any one "correct" or even "best" kind of ritual in the worship of God. While human minds and temperaments differ, and we have no expectation or desire to see the time when they shall not differ, types of ceremonial and devotional observances that help the spiritual life of one man will not be those that prove helpful to another.

In our beliefs, if we put first emphasis on first things, we shall emphasize things in which we are united already. We believe in one God, the Father Almighty. We believe in Jesus Christ, in whose nature and purpose we see the nature and purpose of God. We believe in the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of life." We have one Bible, in whose simple words God speaks to the soul of man as nowhere else; and one gospel, which is richer by far than our varied interpretations of it.

What then can we do, as individuals, to promote the great cause of church unity? We can cheerfully sacrifice some of our preferences, and place some of our doubts aside, for the sake of a greater good. Because certain ways do not appeal to us, it does not follow that it is not advisable for us to follow them, and because we are skeptical about certain doctrines, it does not follow that they express no truth. We can cultivate a spirit of reverential respect for the honest beliefs of other people, and we can keep an open mind to learn from others those truths that we may be inclined to overlook.

We can put first emphasis on the essentials of the faith, as Jesus himself presented them.—Kinsley Blodgett, in The Churchman.

How to Prevent Divisions in the Church

It is Christ who unites us; it is doctrines that divide. As someone has suggested; If you ask a congregation of Christians, "What do you believe?" there will be a chorus of conflicting beliefs, for no two persons believe exactly alike. But if the question is asked, "Whom do you trust?" then we are together. If the emphasis in our approach to Christianity is "What?" then it is divisive, but if the emphasis is "Whom?" then we are drawn together at the place of this Central Magnet. One has the tendency of the centrifugal and the other the tendency of the centripetal. He is the hub that holds together in himself the divided spokes.

The church in China has been rent by controversy. I can see reasons why this has happened. While there I was struck with the fact that Christianity was, on the whole, presented to the Chinese as good teaching, good doctrine, good national policy. It seemed to me to lack just this Christo-centric emphasis to which we have been driven in India. It needed the warm touch of the personal Christ to make it tingle with life and radiance. At the Central Fire suspicious groups could have warmed themselves and would have felt the glow of comradeship as they did so.

A Hindu said to me one day: "You are such a broad-minded Christian." I replied: "My brother, I am the narrowest man you have come across. I am broad on

almost anything else, but on the one supreme necessity for human nature I am absolutely narrowed by the facts to one—Jesus." It is precisely because we believe in the absoluteness of Jesus that we can afford to take the more generous view of the non-Christian systems and situations. But the facts have driven us to Jesus as the supreme necessity for all life everywhere.—E. Stanley Jones, in The Christ of the Indian Road.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. How many hymns in the Hymn Book which we use were written by members of our own denomination? What does this indicate as regards sectarianism? Would you give up "Lead, Kindly Light," because Newman, its author, was a Catholic? Or "We may not climb the heavenly steeps to bring the Lord Christ down," because Whittier was a Quaker? Or "Jesus lover of my soul," because Wesley was a Methodist? Or "O Master, let me walk with thee," because Washington Gladden was a Congregationalist? Or "O day of rest and gladness," because Bishop Wordsworth was an Episcopalian? Or "In the cross of Christ I glory," because Sir John Bowring was a Unitarian?

This may be helpfully continued and the thoughts of the hymns studied from your denominational point of view.

2. The results of the deliberations of the World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne last August. [This book goes to press too early to incorporate them in this lesson.]

3. Christ's law in settling difficulties. See Chapters VIII and X of Christianity and Social Problems, by Lyman Abbott; Chapter X of Influence, by Hugh Black.

4. The unity of hearts in Christ. See Chapter VII of The Master of the Heart, by Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why was the abstaining from eating of meat sacrificed to idols a serious matter in the church at Ephesus? 2. In what dilemma did their question place Paul? 3. How did he meet it? 4. Explain Paul's reasoning. 5. Name ten ways in which the laws of our land interfere with our "personal liberty." 6. Would you have any of them repealed? 7. Would you want your daughter or son to drink? 8. Would you want your employees to drink?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL URGES TEAM-WORK

Beginning the Lesson

When you write a letter you use fine paper and the best of pens and ink. Do you know what materials Paul, or his amanuensis (secretary, we call such a man), used in writing the letter which we study today? How long ago was it written?

There were three kinds of materials used as paper in the Roman Empire: papyrus, which was the inner coat of a plant that grew in swampy lands, especially common in Egypt; parchment, which was made of skins; and wooden tablets, which were covered with wax.

We infer from Paul's remark in 2 Corinthians 3.3 that his letters were written with ink upon papyrus. Let us consider for a moment how his materials were prepared. The Egyptians took pieces of the inner coat of the stem of the papyrus plant (which the Romans called *liber,* book), wet them and joined them together upon a board; then they put a cross layer over the first layer, pressed the two together and exposed them to the hot Egyptian sun. An especially smooth, glossy paper was made by rubbing the sheets with the tooth of some animal.

These sheets, ten inches long by three to twelve wide, were pasted together in long rolls. Some rolls have been preserved to this day which are nearly fifty yards in length. On the edge of the last sheet a stick was fastened so that it could all be rolled up like our maps.

The ink was composed of lamp black and gum. The pen was a reed of much the same shape as our old-time quill-pens; it was split like our pens, and therefore had the name "cloven-footed."

Where was Paul when he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians? Why did he write it?

Team-Work

How many of you have ever played on a basketball or dodge ball or football team? Does the coach urge you to think only of yourself and your own ideas about the game? Why does he advise team-work? What is team-work? Have you ever seen a superior team beaten by a team not so good individually, because the poorer team knew better how to play together? Do you remember any sport Paul mentioned as if he loved to play? Look up Phil. 3.13, 19; 1 Cor. 9.27; 2 Tim. 4.7.

Can you imagine from these references and one in Ephesians, sixth chapter, what kind of boy Paul was, and what kind of man he became?

Just as in a game played in sport on the playground, so in the game of life we can accomplish more by coöperation than by competition. In this way we benefit by the experience of others, we can help the weaker members of the team, and we learn to appreciate virtues and qualities that others possess as well as our own. In the Christian life, too, we can forget our own differences in looking at our Leader, watching for his guidance and following him with complete loyalty and obedience, just as we follow the signal of our captain in the game.

In our lesson text Paul urges team-work. To whom did he write these words? Why? (Follow with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.)

Play the Game

The phrase "Play the game," which one so often hears, clearly means, "Play according to the rules of the game. Observe the principles of action and conduct that have been agreed upon." So interpreted, the colloquial expression enshrines a great Christian truth. We have to live with others, and to learn to combine with them. Most of our life is team-play. To play for one's own hand spoils the game for ourselves and others too, and creates discord and misery. It violates Christ's spirit and the definite command of Paul: "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."—The Sunday-school Chronicle.

Christ and his Tool

The chisel cannot carve a noble statue—it is only cold, dead steel. Yet neither can the artist carve the statue without the chisel. When, however, the two are brought together, when the chisel lays itself in the hands of the sculptor, ready to be used by him, the beautiful work begins. We cannot do Christ's work—our hands are too clumsy for anything so delicate, so sacred; but when we put ourselves into the hands of Christ, his wisdom, his skill and his gentleness flow through us, and the work is done. Christ and we do it—not we alone, for we could not do it, yet not Christ alone, for he depends on us.—Phillips Brooks.

God's Fellow Worker

Two Grand Army men were talking intimately together. "Did I ever tell you about my religious experience?" one of them suddenly asked. Here is what he told his comrade, abridged from The Youth's Companion.

"Well, before long after the war I was just a common drunkard. I'd hate to tell you just how low I got. No job opened to me, and I wasn't looking for one, in particular.

"There was a man named Webster that owned a brickyard. He heard about me, and he came to see me one day when I was getting over a drunk. He took me by the hand, and he said, 'George, I've got a job for you. I want you to make brick out of clay, and at the same time I want you to make a man out of yourself.'

"That's all he said. He just held my hand a minute and looked right into my eyes. I felt it thrilling my heart. I didn't know it then, but I was getting religion that minute. That was more than the hand-shake of a fellow man; the hand of God had hold of his and mine, too, and I felt new life in me that minute.

"I've stuck to it fairly well, and I reckon you'd find it hard to make my grandchildren believe I was once a loafer and a dead beat. But now and then I thank God, who reached down his hand to me in the hand of my fellow man."

Sentence Sermon

It is when men forget Christ that they become divided one from another.—John Gardner.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. From what would Paul have the Christians at Ephesus abstain for the sake of others? Why? 2. Why should it not be any cross to a Christian to give up intoxicating liquor? 3. What does our Golden Text say? 4. How does alcohol harm people?

LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 23

THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

GOLDEN TEXT: Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good. 1 Corinthians 10.24

LESSON 1 Corinthians 8.1-13 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 14.13-21

I CORINTHIANS 8.1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. 2 If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; 3 but if any man loveth God, the same is known by him. 4 Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is *anything* in the world, and that there is no God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; 6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him. 7 Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge; but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as *of* a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENT

Paul had been asked in a letter from the Corinthian Church whether or not one might eat meat which had first been offered to idols. The letter probably suggested that, as an idol was not a real god, it did not matter if the food had been offered to it. The writers doubtless wished to be known as "the party which stood for liberty of conscience, and probably for the Pauline axiom, 'All things are lawful to me.'" Paul's answer follows in this eighth chapter.

Moffatt's version of Paul's words makes them so clear that explanations are unnecessary:

With regard to food that has been offered to idols. Here, of course, "we all possess knowledge!" Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. Whoever imagines he has attained to some degree of knowledge, does not possess the true knowledge yet; but if anyone loves God, he is known by him. Well, then, with regard to food that has been offered to idols, I am quite aware that "there is no such thing as an idol in the world," and that "there is only the one God." (So-called gods there may be, in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are plenty of them, both gods and "lords"—but for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all comes, and for whom we exist; one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom all exists, and by whom we exist.) But remember, it is not everyone who has this "knowledge." Some who have hitherto been accustomed to idols eat the food as food which has been really offered to an idol, and so their weaker conscience is contaminated. Now mere food will not bring us any nearer to God; if we abstain we do not lose anything, and if we eat we do not gain anything. But see that the exercise of your right does not prove any stumbling block to the weak. Suppose anyone sees you, a person of enlightened mind, reclining at meat inside an idol's temple; will that really "fortify his weak conscience"? Will it not embolden him to violate his scruples of conscience by eating food that has been offered to idols? He is ruined, this weak man, ruined by your "enlightened mind," this brother for whose sake Christ died! By sinning against the brotherhood in this way and wounding their weaker consciences, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if food is any hindrance to my brother's welfare, sooner than injure him I will never eat flesh as long as I live, never!

For comment upon the text, here are J. Stuart Holden's words:

Paul, with his accustomed straightforwardness, goes right to the heart of the difficulty. He shifts the basis of all action for Christian men from mere knowledge of circumstance to actual love of God. Thus the case in point is to be decided not merely upon its own merit, but upon the obligation of each believing soul directly toward God, and reflectively toward others. For mere knowledge puffs men up to a false sense of their own importance, while love wooes them to a closer fellowship with

the whole human family of God. The love of God is, therefore, the impulse and inspiration of all right thinking and doing to the believer. If he keeps faith with him, and is loyal to all the obligations of discipleship, he will not be found lacking as regards ethical conduct. Nor to the one who can say, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things," is anything too small or insignificant to be brought under the divine rule.

There is perfect liberty for every believer regarding his personal action in the matter under dispute, but he must always remember the governing law of love towards God. For there is very practical matter which needs to be borne in mind in coming to any conclusion regarding a debatable matter. The influence of any action, however lawful in itself, may be morally and spiritually disastrous to others. Hence the limit of Christian liberty must always be the "weak conscience" of others. The true Christian will have in mind not only the effect of any action upon himself, but upon those also who may be emboldened by its influence to adopt courses which shall end in their own perversion.

[In Martin Luther's famous little treatise on Christian Liberty he declares that "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to all."]

Paul takes very high ground when he says that one who sins—even though it be unconsciously—in this way, by an unregulated use of Christian liberty, is in effect sinning against Christ. But the ground that he takes is in no sense too high, when we bear in mind the closeness with which Christ identifies himself with the least of his brethren. For did he not say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me"?

For himself, Paul is prepared to adopt this as a rule of life, and to limit his liberty in all things and at all times, if there is any danger of its unlimited exercise being a hindrance to others. And in this we need to follow him as he followed Christ. For in this our own day, as in the Corinthian Church, Christian morality is never a mere abstraction. Our creed is to become incarnate in our deeds, and our faith is attested by our works.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Now concerning the things sacrificed to idols, verse 1. This involved the whole problem of social intercourse between Christians and their heathen neighbors. Social festivities commonly partook of a religious character, being conducted under the auspices of some deity, to whom libations were poured or to whom the animals consumed had been dedicated in sacrifice. The idol's house was a rendezvous for banquets. Much of the meat on sale in the markets and found on ordinary tables came from the temples; and without inquiry it was impossible to discriminate. Jewish rule was uncompromisingly strict upon this point; and the letter of the Jerusalem Council, addressed to the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, had directed "the brethren among the Gentiles" to "abstain from meat offered to idols."

The Corinthian Church, in consulting Paul, had expressed its own leaning toward liberty in the matter. What will the apostle say? It is a real dilemma for him. He has to vindicate the broad principles of spiritual religion; at the same time he must avoid wounding Jewish feeling, and must guard Gentile weakness against the seductions of heathen feasts and against the peril of relapsing into idolatry through intercourse with unconverted kindred and neighbors. In theory Paul is for freedom, but in practise for great restrictions.—The Expositor's Greek Testament.

We know that no idol is anything, verse 4. The sacrifice, the mystical and sacramental meal, was of the essence of the mystery religion, its very center, and the ground of all the hopes and feelings associated with it. What was the effect of the sight and sound of heathenism on the Jewish mind?

Round the corner sounds the gong that beats monotonously morning and evening in honor of Shitala, goddess of smallpox; day by day you see her image; as you go to the University of Calcutta, you see educated men abasing themselves before a doll or a devil. You see shrines carved with legends of impurity, naked and unashamed, indescribable; you know quite well, and the priests know you know, what goes on in those temples—sacred prostitution flourishes in Southern India, as it did in the town of Corinth while Paul lived there two years. It is more than possible to feel, as you look at a Hindu temple of the south, a thrill of satisfaction and sympathy with the Moslems, who in God's name destroyed such places. Every time you contrast the carved idols with the beautiful texts in Arabic with which the Mohammedan adorns

his mosque, you stand once more with the monotheist. That such were the feelings of the Jews in the Hellenistic world, we do not need to be told—their contempt for idols and idolaters, their hatred of them, the deep-going reaction against them, their repugnance in every fiber, need no commentary.—T. R. Glover, in Paul of Tarsus.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Recall the location of Ephesus and the circumstances under which Paul labored there. What was the problem which Paul settled for the church at Ephesus in our lesson last week? How did he settle it? How would that solution answer the problem of the church which is our theme today?

The First Epistle to the Corinthians

See our Introduction.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In view of the fact that so much is said about the poor enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment, perhaps it would be helpful to consider how slowly reforms are usually brought about. A study of the Old Testament prophets' struggle for monotheism would be interesting. This struggle continued for hundreds of years before the Jewish people wholly gave up idolatry. Take the slavery question in our own country and in the world. This subject has agitated Christian people for generations. In 1787 a clause was put into the Constitution that "the importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit" was to cease in 1808, but the importation of slaves from Africa did not cease until the promulgation of the Emancipation Proclamation.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD OF SOCIAL CONDUCT

Beginning the Lesson

The problem which the church in Corinth brought to Paul, and which he discusses with them here in our text, is a problem that faces us all, though in different form. Why was theirs so serious a problem for the church at Ephesus? See Light from Oriental Life.

When meat had been offered to idols, could it be eaten with impunity by Christians? There was no harm in the meat itself, and the enlightened Christians knew also that the idols were nothing, so for them there was no harm in eating such meat. But what if some weaker, less enlightened Christians felt that it was wrong, should their convictions be respected by those who knew that they themselves might eat without defiling themselves?

Let us read Paul's argument in Moffatt's translation (Explanations and Comments).

The Christian Standard of Social Conduct

It is a very lofty standard of conduct that Paul puts before us in these verses from First Corinthians. It is the question of love or liberty. The motive of personal liberty when viewed in the light of our brother's need, becomes a faint and ineffective motive, and we as Christians must follow Paul in saying, "If spiritous liquor causes my brother to stumble, I will not drink it for ever more, that I cause not my brother to stumble."

Writing on "The Social Ideas of Isaiah," Dr. C. E. Jefferson has this to say which bears upon our topic:

"Tens of thousands of Americans break the Prohibition Law, and not a few of these are members of Christian churches. It is not simply ignorant foreigners in our great cities who are trampling upon the law; it is men and women in our highest American homes—men and women of culture and great social influence who openly deride and trample on the law of their country. How can you account for that? There is no explanation but this: These people have been brought up in the individualist school of ethics. They argue in this manner: 'Alcohol does not hurt me, and therefore I propose to drink whenever I please. I think of myself first. I think of myself last. I think of myself all the time. I do not think of anybody else but myself.' Oh, the pity of it—that we have members of the Christian church who have no social vision, and therefore no social conscience, and who therefore begin and end with themselves."

There are references to wine in the Bible which seem to sanction its use. Christ turned water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana. In one of our texts this year he speaks of wine in his parable about new wine and old wine-skins as if wine were a desirable commodity. And so it was for people living in a land where drinking water was scarce and obtained by toilsomely going to the well to draw, as the Woman of Samaria complained. Were Jesus here today, would he sanction the use of wine in our country where pure water is available everywhere? Would he not fulfil the law by agreeing with Paul that "It is not good to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth"?

Is drink so great an evil in the United States as to require control by law, or should it be left entirely to personal choice? We as a nation have said that the former is the case. Whether or not we believe in the power of the law to put an end to the evil, its power has been invoked; we have the statutory regulation; the Prohibition Amendment represents the will of the people the country over, and stands today as the law of the land.

In the words of Judge Maltbie, "From the earliest times it has been recognized that society in the United States of America could not brook an unrestrained liberty in any man to deal in or use intoxicating liquors, because their abuse was inevitable and was inevitably followed by too much misery and evil, and because the liberty of one to pursue the pleasures of the palate too often resulted in the denial to others, not of pleasure alone, but of the means of comfort, the opportunities of education, the bare necessities of life. Gradually the feeling grew that the only just course for all was to deny absolutely the right of any to purvey the cause of so much evil. Then the final appeal was made to the highest arbiter the forefathers provided for the settlement of questions of government, and the decision was made that the manufacture and sale of intoxicants must cease."

The Cry of Personal Liberty

Personal liberty is being abridged. Such is the cry of the wets who are moving heaven and earth to bring back the old saloon. They say they do not want the saloon back; they only want light wines and beer. Where would the stuff be sold? Would it be in a candy shop or a millinery parlor? A saloon by any other name would be the same old joint; changing the name wouldn't change its character. Yes, personal liberty is being assaulted. Our compulsory school law, the laws establishing a quarantine about a house where there is smallpox, the traffic laws, the laws against carrying weapons, all these and countless others to which we yield ready obedience, interfere with our personal liberty. The Bolshevik and the Anarchist say, "If you don't like the law don't obey it, break it, make them repeal it." It is time that this very elementary lesson in human government be learned; that public welfare is above personal rights. The wet gang also says that we shouldn't have a law until public sentiment demands it. If God himself had waited for public sentiment the Ten Commandments would not be written yet. Let us not be fooled; the saloon gangs never obeyed the law in the old days, they are not obeying the law now, and they wouldn't keep the law if the bars were lifted to allow any sort of booze to be sold.—The Old South Leaflet of Worcester, Massachusetts.

What Is more Precious than Personal Liberty?

There is one pearl which most people value—the pearl of personal liberty. Liberty is a precious possession; we regard it as of great and significant value. But suppose I discover another pearl of greater value, which cannot be gained without the sacrifice of personal liberty. What is my duty in the sight of God? The duty of sacrifice; to sell what I have and to buy it; to let go the one pearl for the sake of getting the other. But what can be more precious than personal liberty? Social redemption. Personal liberty is good, social redemption is better. By social redemption I mean a saved commonwealth; the integrity and purity and sound moral health of social life. The moral welfare of a city is of greater value than the personal liberty of any individual citizen.—J. H. Jowett, in The Folly of Unbelief.

Why President Henry Churchill King Is a Total Abstainer

The fact that men are carried by the use of alcoholic liquor into a condition in which they are of small or no value to themselves or to society, seems to me to be a sufficient reason why I should throw the entire influence of my individual practise in favor of total abstinence. The simple chance that my individual or family use of alcoholic liquors might be the occasion of starting another man in a custom that would mean absolute ruin to him, is reason enough for my total abstinence.

Theodore Roosevelt's Counsel

There is always a tendency among very young men and among boys who are not quite young men as yet to think that to be wicked is rather smart; to think it shows that they are men. Oh, how often you see some young fellow who boasts that he is going to "see life," meaning by that that he is going to see that part of life which would a thousand fold better remain unseen! I ask that every man here constitute himself his brother's keeper by setting an example to that younger brother which will prevent him from getting such a false estimate of life. Example is the most potent of all things. If any one of you in the presence of younger boys, especially the younger people of your own family, misbehaves yourself, if you use coarse and blasphemous language before them, you can be sure that younger people will follow your example and not your precept.

"For My Son's Sake"

"A man came to see me not long ago and said he wanted to take the pledge," says Russell Conwell. "I asked him if he couldn't get along without taking it, and he said, 'I suppose I could; I have never been a drunkard.' I asked him why he wished to take the pledge. 'Well,' he said, 'this is the story. I take wine frequently. I have it on the sideboard at my home, and when any of my friends who drink come there, I put it on the table. It seems the right thing to do, and I am not afraid to take a glass of wine with a friend. It does not hurt me. I am not afraid. But my son, only eleven years old, was found out in the back yard last Thursday, dead drunk from the wine that had been on my sideboard, and a physician told me it will be remarkable if that is not a seated appetite from which he will never recover. I feel as though I had been one of the blackest of murderers.' 'Now,' said he, 'I want to be able to say to my son, "Your father signed a temperance pledge; your father has set you a better example!" I talked with my son and told him about the awful sin of drink, and confessed that I had done wrong, and that I was going to find some preacher or priest and sign a sacred pledge.' I wrote out the pledge for him, and at the bottom of it I put these words, 'For my son's sake.' He said, 'That is what I want; it is for my son's sake.'"

Ruining Others for the Sake of Gain

In recent years a "World Conference on Narcotic Education" has been held annually in Philadelphia. The Preamble of its Constitution gives the purpose of this organization: "We, the people of the world, in order perpetually to protect society everywhere from the peril of Narcotic Drug Addiction by applying the power of truth through education, do ordain and establish this constitution for humanity."

Representative Walter F. Lineberger of California in an open letter calls attention to this growing evil as follows:

"Hon. Frederick A. Wallis, Commissioner of Correction, New York City, declares: 'The greatest menace to the nation is drug addiction. Nearly 60 per cent of the inmates convicted of offenses involving moral turpitude, in all our city penal and correctional institutions, are users or peddlers of drugs.' The Criminal Identification Bureau of his Department states that there are thousands of heroin addicts, chiefly youths in their late teens and early twenties, all actual or potential criminals, who serve also as recruiting agents for the army of the 'Living Dead.' 'Heroin changes a misdemeanant over night into a desperado of the most vicious type. Every day murders, hold-ups and robberies are committed by drug-crazed individuals. The increase in narcotics has been accompanied by an increase in crime.'

"Ten ounces of alcohol will kill one man; ten ounces of heroin will kill 3,000 men. Ten ounces of alcohol distributed over a week can scarcely cause the beginnings of drunkenness in even one youth; ten ounces of heroin applied over a week can produce incurable addiction in thousands of youths. The profits that urge on the traffic are hundreds of per cent for alcohol, but are thousands of per cent for narcotic drugs. Drug addiction is secretive. Even well informed people never heard of heroin. Detected offenses against the Federal Narcotic Laws were about 1,000 in 1917; in 1925 they were 10,426. The people must know about this newest and deadliest enemy that lies in wait for the youth of the land, 'hooking' them by the tens of thousands because of their ignorance."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Is it spiritually injurious to do what one's conscience disapproves?
2. What is the right attitude toward so-called Personal Liberty? What is the

liberty of Christian fathers in regard to drinking? "There come times when a man may exercise even the higher right of giving up his liberty," declared Henry Drummond. See Chapters XII and XIII of Irving Fisher's Prohibition at Its Worst.

3. Drinking among youth. See Chapter V of Irving Fisher's Prohibition at Its Worst.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Beginning the Lesson

You all know, of course, that Paul and all the New Testament writers wrote in Greek, and their words as we have them in our English Bibles have been translated for us by scholars. In recent years a noted English scholar, Dr. James Moffatt, has translated the Bible into modern English, keeping very close to the spirit of the original writings. It is always helpful to read his version in connection with the King James' Version, or with the American Revised Version (which is used in the majority of Church-schools), for it throws new light upon many a passage. Especially helpful is his translation of Paul's writings. Today we have another excerpt from Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Let us read it verse by verse, first from our Bible, and then from Dr. Moffatt's translation. (See Explanations and Comments.)

How Alcohol Affects People

The reason we do not wish our boys and girls to drink alcoholic liquor is not only because it is against the law, but because of its evil effects upon them. It is bad for them mentally, morally and physically.

"At the punch-bowl's brink
Let the thirsty think
What they say in Japan:
First the man takes a drink,
Then the drink takes a drink,
Then the drink takes the man!"

A medical authority of high standing (Dr. Haven Emerson) gives this summary of what alcohol is and does:

Alcohol is a depressant, habit-forming narcotic drug.

Alcohol is a poison.

Alcohol is drunk to get the drug effect, and whenever it is so taken in whatever amount, it exerts to some degree its depressant and toxic effects.

Alcohol causes disease; psychoses, multiple neuritis, gastritis, cirrhosis of the liver.

Alcohol causes deaths from acute and chronic poisoning.

Alcohol reduces resistance to infection.

Alcohol diminishes likelihood of recovery from acute infections, such as pneumonia.

Alcohol increases liability to accidents, and delays recovery.

Alcohol reduces endurances, accuracy and rapidity of muscular action of all kinds, even when used in such small amounts as to show effects inappreciable subjectively to the user.

Alcohol decreases expectation of life.

Alcohol reduces chance and survival of offspring.

Alcohol deteriorates emotional and nervous control, as expressed in judgment and self-control.

Abstinence for the Sake of Others

Two boys, John and Charles, are studying their history lesson. John, a brilliant student, can master his work in half an hour, while Charles needs two hours or more of quiet concentration to accomplish the same result. As soon as John finishes, he demands that Charles stop work, too, and go off for a ride or a hike. Do you think this is what John ought to do if he really cares for Charles and his success? Should one have a standard simply for oneself, or should one alter that standard for the sake of others who are weaker or are under some handicap, physical or mental?

Two older boys like to take a drink occasionally. A can drink without any visibly bad effects, but B's experience is always a bad one, and he is easily led by other boys. What should A's attitude toward drinking be if he is really fond of his chum?

Why Dr. Lorenz Does not Drink

I am a surgeon. My success depends upon my brain being clear, my muscles firm,

and my nerves steady. No one can take alcoholic liquors without blunting these physical powers which I must keep always on edge. As a surgeon I must not drink.

A Pledge Signed for Another's Sake

The Liverpool Daily Post gives an interesting account of the signing of the pledge by Tawhiao, King of the New Zealand Maoris:

"Tawhiao was anything but an abstainer, and his evil doings were a source of perpetual anxiety. Londoners will still remember his visit to England nearly twenty years ago, when he was, as far as a Maori monarch could be, one of the lions of the season. It was at the outset of his journey that he called upon Sir George Gray. Sir George Gray boldly raised the question which was troubling Tawhiao's friends. What, he asked Tawhiao, would he think of a man who brought about the death of a fellow-being, or of many fellow-beings, or who destroyed the happiness of a whole nation? "Who could be so cruel? It is not possible that anybody could be so wicked," said the King, and as he realized the meaning of the question he sobbed like a child, and asked Sir George pitifully what could be done lest he should disgrace the Maori people while in England. "I'll tell you," said Sir George. "We'll both sign the pledge, agreeing to abstain from alcohol in any form. That pledge will mutually bind us for a number of years, and there could be no more sacred contract."

A Great Inventor who Should Have Abstained for the Sake of the World

"While I am alive, I am just obliged to smoke. My tobacco is part of me." These were the words of Steinmetz, the great electrical engineer and inventor.

"I saw Steinmetz one day when he was not smoking," said the mayor of Schenectady.

"Was he sleeping?" asked one who knew him well.

"No. But I was—and the shock woke me up."

Evidently the great inventive genius was smoked to death, as the Good Health magazine reports. Chronic nicotine poisoning killed him. "Steinmetz smoked so incessantly his body had no time to recover. He finally burned up the last bit of vitality left in his system, and his life went out smothered by tobacco smoke. Tobacco has robbed the country of two loved Presidents and now has killed one of the greatest inventors who has ever lived.

"The medical director of a great life insurance company informed the writer that he himself and the actuary of his company, a well-known expert, had independently reached the conclusion that the mortality of smokers is ten per cent greater than that of non-smokers. This estimate is doubtless far below the truth, and everybody ought to know that tobacco in all forms is a poison. Tobacco using is an assault upon health and efficiency. Alcohol, tobacco, opium, and cocain are a quartette of poisons which undermine the race physically, mentally and morally. When a man says, as Steinmetz did, 'Tobacco is part of me,' he confesses that he is a slave to the drug; in other words, that he is a dope fiend.

"The General Electric Company found it necessary to endorse a rule against smoking as a protection against fire. The rule, 'No Smoking,' not only prevents fire but prevents an enormous waste of time, and a still greater waste of vitality and efficiency. The habitual smoker wastes an enormous amount of time in coddling and posing and otherwise manipulating his pipe, cigar or cigarette, to say nothing of the great amount of time lost and mental energy squandered in pipe dreams. Excessive use of tobacco lessens the efficiency, blunts sensibility, distorts the judgment, and so enslaves and befuddles its victims that they are made to believe it to be a friendly solace and an indispensable support, as did poor Steinmetz.

"If Steinmetz had not smoked he would have accomplished twice as much as he did, and would still be alive with a life expectancy of twenty years or more ahead of him. Tobacco killed him just as it is killing thousands of others who imagine it to be a friend, when instead it is an enemy and an assassin."

Sentence Sermons

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.—Paul.

There are two freedoms, the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.—Charles Kingsley.

Temperance puts wood on the fire, meal in the barrel, flour in the tub, money in the purse, credit in the country, contentment in the house, clothes on the back, and vigor in the body.—Benjamin Franklin.

LESSON XIV—SEPTEMBER 30

REVIEW: PAUL THE MISSIONARY

GOLDEN TEXT: Christ liveth in me. Galatians 2.20

DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 4.4-8, 19, 20

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation and let all pupils who recognize the allusion signify this. Then ask one of them to tell the lesson to which the allusion refers, or ask the other pupils questions in regard to it.

There have been men like those Jews in every age and every land who have delighted in stirring up others. There is no community free from them.

"Nurse Cavell in Belgium was hemmed in by a brutal soldiery who gnashed on her with their teeth, and she was at once heroic and tender and forgiving."

When men refuse to retain God in their knowledge, they can hardly expect to be secure from the temptation to bow before creatures of like passions with themselves, whether they be cunning adventurers or heartless tyrants.—The Christian.

"The supernatural is the native air of Christianity, its cradle-song is that of angels, its death-chant the triumphant exclamation, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened.'"

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it.—Lyman Abbott.

"There stood a man of Belgium saying, 'Come over and help us,' and immediately men of Britain arose to answer the call."

We cannot think of the vastnesses of the universe without feeling that we are citizens of no mean city, but perhaps we should be more impressed by the order and the uniformity of the heavens.—J. Arthur Thomson.

"When came the Sabbath of worship and rest,
Out of the city, in reverent quest,
Down by the riverside faithful ones came,
Where prayer was wont to be made in his name."

The world has often had its dreams of gods who had come down in the likeness of men, and even of a divine influence pervading all things; but no ethnic religion has told how men may come to God.—H. E. Fox.

"The talk of Lenine was overbearing and belligerent as he breathed out threatenings and slaughter on the road to Genoa."

"What is all this solar energy compared to that boundless supply of divine grace—always available to the believing heart! Therein lies power to turn the world upside down, if only the people of God would receive and transmit what he is so willing to bestow!—The Christian.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults

1. Why did Paul choose the larger cities for his work? 2. What is your estimate of the character of James from his part in the Council of Jerusalem? 3. What great forward step was taken at that Council? 4. Where and how was the first missionary movement initiated? 5. What grade of men and women should we send as missionaries, and why? 6. What is the newer viewpoint about foreign missions? 7. How did Mark arouse Paul's displeasure, and of what was he the cause? 8. How was the church founded at Philippi? 9. What lessons did Paul teach the Corinthians? 10. What characteristics of Paul have these lessons revealed?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Where was Paul born? By what influences was he surrounded as a boy? How was he educated? 2. Who was the first Christian martyr, and why and how did he meet his death? What words of his remind us of Christ? 3. What changed Saul from a persecutor of the Christians into a great worker for Christ? Where? 4. Where did the followers of Christ first receive the name of Christians? 5. Where

was the gospel first preached in Europe, and who were the first converts? 6. Name the cities where Paul founded churches. 7. In what cities was Paul persecuted? Tell an incident which reveals Paul's great courage. 8. Contrast the hearers of Thessalonica and Berœa. 9. What connection with the life and work of Paul did each of these men have: Barnabas, Ananias, Peter, Silas, Stephen? 10. What qualities possessed by Paul do you need to cultivate?

A REVIEW OF THE ACTS

1. What is the relationship between the Third Gospel and The Acts? 2. Of what acts is the book a record? 3. Who is the leader in the history before Acts 12? 4. After Acts 12? 5. Who wrote The Acts? 6. Who was Luke? 7. What connection had he with Paul? 8. When was the book probably written? 9. What is the purpose of the book? 10. What are its three keynotes, as Luke declares them in his introduction? 11. What is the character of the book? 12. What period of time does its history cover? 13. How reliable is it? 14. Give an outline of the book. 15. What are its lessons for us?

A REVIEW OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES

1. Name the Epistles written by Paul in the order in which they appear in the New Testament. 2. What have their salutations in common? 3. How is their true Pauline character attested? 4. What is their relation to The Acts? 5. Name them in the probable order in which they were written. 6. What was the occasion of their writing? 7. What letters were written to individuals? 8. What features have the Epistles in common? 9. What is their value for us? 10. To whom was First Corinthians written? 11. What is the character of the letter? 12. What is its great theme? 13. What are its great chapters? 14. What is its special value for us?

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. Paul's letter to his Parents in Tarsus about his Life in Jerusalem.
2. Paul's Account of the Stoning of Stephen Written to a Friend in Tarsus.
3. A Letter to the Jerusalem Courier about the New Departure in the Church at Antioch.
4. An Editorial in The Antioch News Expressing Regret at the Departure of Paul and Barnabas.
5. A Report of the Council at Jerusalem Written by James.
6. An Interview with the Priest of Jupiter Reported in the Lystra Herald Concerning Paul and Barnabas.
7. An Account in the Thessalonian Journal of a Recent Riot.
8. The Report Made to the Society for the Protection of Roman Rights by One of its Agents Concerning the Treatment of Paul at Philippi.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. The Early Life and Education of Paul.
2. The Death of the First Christian Martyr.
3. A Characterization of Barnabas.
4. An Account of Paul's First Missionary Journey.
5. A Midnight Experience at Philippi.
6. An Account of Paul's Second Missionary Journey.

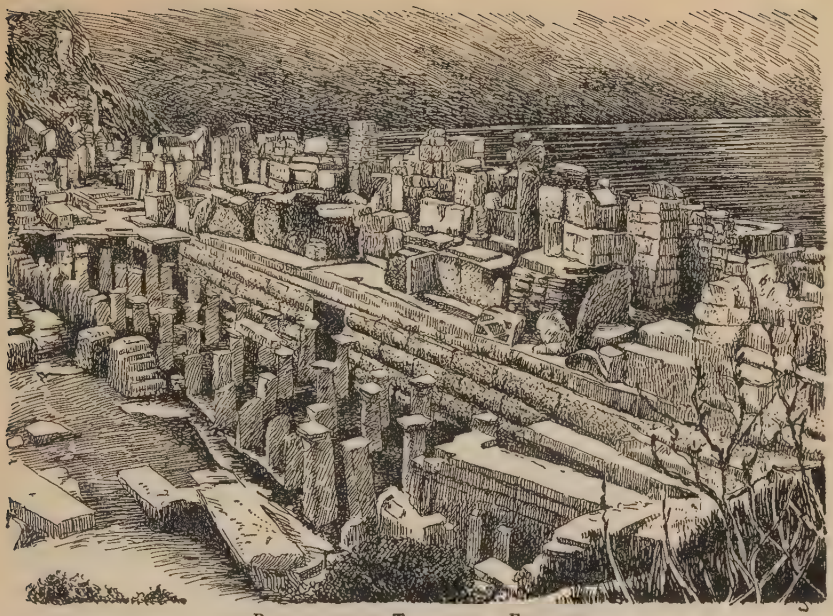
QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults

1. Where does the first sentence of our text from Ephesians end? 2. What does Paul say should be the one goal of all the Christian workers mentioned in verse 11? 3. Explain verse 13. 4. How do you reconcile Jesus' saying that we must become as little children with Paul's statement that we must be no longer children?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Where was Ephesus? 2. How long did Paul stay in Ephesus? (Acts 20.31.) 3. Why did the magicians burn their books? 4. What caused them to outgrow their superstition? 5. What is superstition? 6. What superstitious acts are done today? 7. Do you practise any superstition? 8. If so, what should you do about it?



RUINS OF THE THEATER AT EPHESUS

FOURTH QUARTER

LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL

(SECOND HALF OF A SIX-MONTHS' COURSE)

LESSON 1—OCTOBER 7

PAUL IN EPHESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2.10

LESSON Acts 19.1-41; Ephesians 4.16.

DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 3.14-21

ACTS 19.8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading *as to* the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

18 Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. 19 And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

EPHESIANS 4.11 And he gave some *to be* apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, *even* Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE FORFEITED CHANCE, Acts 19.8, 9. On his third missionary journey (see The Historical Background) Paul came to Ephesus, where he followed his

customary method of speaking first to the Jews, and then to the Greeks. For three months in the synagogue he reasoned and persuaded as to the things concerning the Kingdom—the subject of Jesus' teaching. But instead of heeding his message, the Jews hardened their hearts, and some of them even spoke evil of "the Way" (used as a synonym for Christianity: recall Acts 9.2). Paul was obliged to break with the Jews, leaving the synagogue for the lecture-room of Tyrannus, where many of them followed him. Tyrannus was probably a Gentile who had a school of philosophy. Paul may have seemed to the Ephesians to be one of the wandering professors of philosophy who were so numerous in the early Empire. In the lecture-room of Tyrannus, from eleven to four, after that philosopher had finished his lectures, Paul proclaimed unto his hearers Jesus the Christ.

II. TWO FRUITFUL YEARS, Acts 19.10. For two years Paul continued teaching in the school of Tyrannus, and "all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Within easy reach of Ephesus were the other cities of the Roman Province of Asia (on the western shore of Asia Minor). During these years were probably founded the others of the Seven Churches of Asia of Revelation 1.4,11.

III. A NOTABLE BONFIRE, Acts 19.18-20. An incident showing the power of God over exorcists (verses 13-17) led to a reformation within and without the church.

"Candor compels us to admit that in America there is still much paganism. Up and down the western coast one can find the temples of alien religions, mostly of the orient, where strange ritualistic cults challenge the sway of Christianity. Since the war there has been a great growth of Spiritualism. Even if one admits that some very intelligent and educated people hold to Spiritualism in a tentative way and in the scientific spirit of investigation, one must confess that the popular practise of mediums is but a recrudescence of some of the most ancient superstitions of the race" (The Christian Century).

Many of the converts who had practised magical arts came and, publicly renouncing their deeds, brought their books and burned them in the sight of all. "These were books of formulæ for compelling the assistance of spiritual beings, or securing the affections of a beloved, or for inflicting pain and spiritual torment" (A. S. Peake). The act destroyed property valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver, or the customary pay for fifty thousand days' labor. Probably there were few copies of the magicians' scrolls, and to their rarity was due their valuation.

"The amends for the past which we can make will be to add to the past no more past for which amends are needed" (Robert E. Speer).

Recall how the Florentines under the teachings of Savonarola brought their dice, playing cards, books, rouge-pots, false hair, etc., and piled them up in a great pyramid in the Great Square and burned them. (Read the account in chapter 49 of Romola). "I have given my heart to God, and I have burned my betting-books," said a convert in a Welsh revival.

"The probability is that had the Ephesians waited till the morrow, there would not have been a man that would have burned his book. They were wise enough to take advantage of the impulse to reform when it was on them. Never lose a minute in taking advantage of an opportunity to act in the direction of a higher good or a nobler manhood. Never lose a minute in doing right when the right way is presented to you" (Henry Ward Beecher).

"So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed": thus Luke sums up the result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus.

IV. THE ONE GOAL OF VARIOUS CHRISTIAN WORKERS, Ephesians 4.11-13. Here we have one of Paul's involved sentences, for verses 11 to 16 run on without a period till the end. And *he* gave, Paul says (in the Greek the emphasis is upon the one who gave, "He it is who gave," that is, Christ), to some to be apostles, to others to be prophets, to others to be evangelists, and to yet others to be pastors and teachers. These various gifts of leadership were entrusted to them to be used in preparing others, the members of the church—for the perfecting of the saints—for

the work of service, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.

V. THE CLIMAX OF CHRISTIAN ATTAINMENT, Ephesians 4.13-16. The goal Paul next declares to be nothing less than the attaining of unity of faith and of knowledge of the Son of God, of full grown manhood, and of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. "We are all to come to a 'perfect man.' The thought is not that we are to be perfect men: but that we are to converge upon, gather ourselves into one humanity, which will be consciously *one* as a single person is, and of which every member will help every other. This humanity will be mature, full grown, of a fullness of life which would be inconceivable to us had we not seen in Christ what man may be, and how deep and rich may be the content of human life. Think of the courage which, in the face of the antagonisms and radical hostilities with which Paul was so familiar, could announce a future like this for man, in Christ!

"This maturity of humanity is to be brought about by very reasonable means. First comes that unity which is the outcome of 'the faith,' i.e., of that view of God and of the world to which the Christian stands committed, and which is also the outcome of a personal knowledge of the Son of God. It is around his person that men converge upon maturity. As men see him, they separate ideals and policies fall away ashamed, and in his Sonship they rise to a new conception of what man should be; and, held by this conception, are drawn near to one another in a body of love.

"The one thing that is more amazing than this sketch of the progress of humanity is the degree to which already it has been realized. Jesus is today the one uniting force making for the gathering together of the nations in kindliness and justice. And one day he will be everywhere known, and the race will be a family again, at home in God" (S. A. Johnston Ross).

Paul would not have his readers like children who are easily led, "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error," but firm and stable, dealing truly, ("speaking the truth in love") and "growing up in all things into him, who is the Head, even Christ."

"No minister can be satisfied with a church composed of childish people, who have no convictions, but are like boats rising and falling with the waves, drifting before the wind and tide, moved this way and that by any specious argument or fine sounding phrase. He wants his people to follow and to confess the truth without prejudice, without narrow-mindedness. We do not become full grown men in a day. Manhood is the goal; to attain it involves discipline, effort, patient application. You must keep the end in view, you must study your Model, you must maintain vital contact with Christ, you must grow unto him. He is your Example" (John Gardner).

"From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth (this last phrase is reminiscent of the technical language of the Greek medical writers) according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." "Language cannot express the full truth. Christ is the Head. He is also the whole organism. He is also the source of its unity, growth and energy. Consistency of thought and language is lost in the divine physiology" (Dummelow).

"Alas, too many of us are out of joint! We are in the body of Christ, but, like dislocated limbs, are useless; and before we can fulfil the great ministry which Jesus desires to fulfil by our means, we must be articulated and jointed with the living Head" (F. B. Meyer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The school of Tyrannus, Acts 19.9. The business hours for the citizens and workers of the cities of the East ended by the middle of the day, so probably Paul taught every afternoon in the hired lecture hall, and officials of the city, lawyers, shop-keepers and craftsmen could attend.

Not a few of them practised magical arts, Acts 19.19. Recent discoveries have revealed the immense popularity of magic under the Roman Empire. The papyri discovered in Egypt are filled with mystic formulæ.—Foakes-Jackson.

Since Ephesus was a special center for magicians, Paul was here, as always, making his attacks in a vital place. At a time when men lived in fear of unseen magical influences the gospel came as a great relief and deliverance. When Paul speaks of Jesus as exalted above the powers, he is assuring his Christian converts that they serve a greater Master, and that they may ignore all thought of magic.

Those that practised magical arts, Acts 19.19. In traveling through Palestine, one notices the superstition that reigns in the life of the Hebrew as well as of the Gentile. Be a man ever so versed in religious matters, he still resorts to the belief in necromancy, and in matters of import advises with fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, and wizards. The Mohammedans use their string of beads, or rosary, something after the childish inquiry made in civilization with the daisy by pulling out the petals, commencing with "He loves me, he loves me not"; so they commence "Successful, not successful," and the last bead tells them what they desire to know. There are many men and women in Palestine who have made themselves rich by this nefarious business of telling fortunes.

At the door of mosques, or even churches and synagogues, we see men and sometimes old women who have passed threescore years and ten, seated on a little rug or mat, in front of them a tray covered with sand about half an inch deep, in which they draw squares and write cabalistic letters, by which they pretend to tell past and present events, and to discover lost articles. They have perfect liberty in plying their trade, and are never given up as false pretenders to the government, for as a rule, these people profess to be highly religious, and when they have no customer one notices their lips moving continually, their heads shaking and nodding as if in devotion and prayer.

A child in a Hebrew family in Palestine wears sewed on his cap, or hanging around his neck, a little silver or copper locket enclosing a slip of parchment or paper written in cabalistic letters, insuring him against accidents of all kinds. Grown men and women carry around on their bodies, usually hanging from the neck, little pieces of alum engraved with letters, or shreds of cloth procured from some shrine, believing in the efficacy of their saving power.—Gamahliel Ward-el-Ward, in Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

How did Jesus picture the Kingdom of God in one of our First Quarter's lessons? In what lesson did we hear of those of "the Way," and what did the term mean? Where were the followers of Christ first called Christians? In what other places has Paul spoken first to the Jews in their synagogue and then was forced to leave them?

The Close of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Corinth seems to be the outstanding city from which Paul departed in peace and quiet. It was the limit of his Second Missionary Journey; from there he set his face toward Jerusalem and Antioch of Syria. With Aquila and Priscilla he set sail from the harbor of Cenchreæ and crossed the Ægean Sea to Ephesus. There he left his two companions, but did not yield to the entreaties of the Jews in whose synagogue he preached that he himself tarry longer, for he was desirous of spending the coming Passover with the Christian community at Jerusalem. Promising to come again if God so willed, he sailed to Cæsarea, and then journeyed on to Jerusalem. Here he celebrated the Passover, reported the results of his missionary labors and returned, by way of Cæsarea, no doubt, to Antioch in Syria, which he had left four years earlier on his Second Missionary Journey.

The Beginning of Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Paul spent some time in Antioch of Syria, and then started forth again. He went by way of Tarsus and the Cilician Gates to the churches which he had founded in the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, and "established all the disciples." He continued on to Ephesus, and there he remained from 54 to 57 A. D., a longer time than he spent in any other city where he founded a church.

During this time he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, and possibly organized the churches of Colossæ and Hierapolis, and others besides Ephesus of the "Seven Churches in Asia," **Rev. 1.11.**

The Departure from Ephesus

Read the account in Acts 19.21-41 of the uproar in the temple of Diana which made necessary Paul's departure from the city.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

A few years after he had left Ephesus Paul wrote his letter. He was then a prisoner at Rome, but you would never suppose it from this inspiring, uplifting letter. See the discussion of the letter in our Introduction.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia (in Asia Minor), ranked with Antioch and Alexandria as the greatest cities of the Eastern Mediterranian. It had a fine harbor at the mouth of the Cayster, whose channel was then kept navigable for the largest sea-going vessels of the time, and it carried on a great commerce. The wares of China, India and Persia were brought here by caravan, then shipped to Greece and Rome. The harbor now is a mere marsh.

The city was especially famed for its temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

In Intermediate and Senior Classes the time may be spent profitably upon our text from Acts 19 with the topic for the Departments based upon it—Outgrowing Superstition—the text from Ephesians being omitted altogether.

In Young People's and Adult Classes the story of Paul's activities in Ephesus should be rapidly recalled in order to keep the history well in mind, and then the major part of the time should be devoted to a consideration of Paul's words in our text from Ephesians.

On returning from a vacation one year Dr. Lyman Abbott chose Ephesians 4.11-13 for his text, and in his discourse turned to the Church-school teachers and expressed a thought which I would leave with you: "Looking into your faces, Sunday-school teachers, I beseech you, as I beseech myself, that we may work together this fall and winter heartily, sincerely, earnestly and prayerfully for such a revival of religion as shall make men and women of the stature of Jesus Christ."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson

Growth is life. It has been often said that unless one is growing he is dying, and evidently Paul is very sure that this is true in the Christian life. We all know the physical law of growth for plants and for children, and we know that all growing things need light and food. For mental and spiritual development, too, the same rule holds—we all need light and food. The light and food we get from the Word of God, from the Spirit of God working in us, and from the communion of spiritually-minded friends. Paul's thought in his letter to the Ephesians is even deeper and greater. We are growing toward a certain thing—"the full-grown man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

A Terra Cotta Miniature Shrine of Cybele, Found at Athens
Of this sort were the shrines of Diana of Ephesus

"I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
That help, he needed once, and needs no more,
Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:
For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
This imports solely, man should mount on each
New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,
The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
Man apprehends him newly at each stage
Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done" (Browning).

Growing Together in Christ

In a recent lesson of the last quarter, Paul speaks of the importance of merging our selfish interests into the common good in the Christian life. Here again in his letter to the Ephesians he has the same thought. John 15 is Jesus' expression of growth together. So are many of his parables—the mustard seed, the leaven—agencies of growth and growth for the benefit of the whole.

This is a thought upon which Professor Francis Greenwood Peabody likes to dwell. Here is what he said about it to a group of college students:

"And ye are complete in him," says the Apostle Paul. No mistake about religion is more persistent than the notion that it is chiefly concerned with giving up things. You give up your pleasures, your happiness, your freedom of thought and action, and then you seem to be on the way to be a Christian. Religion becomes a process of subtraction; it tells you the things which you may not do. Renunciation, self-denial, *"Entsagen,"* as Carlyle called it, is the aim of the Christian life. The monk and the hermit are the saints of the church. All this is in sharp contrast with the spirit of the New Testament. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." "I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." "Of his fulness have we all received." "Ye are complete in him,"—these are the great words which strike the full, rich chord of the Christian character. The Christian ideal is not of negation but of appreciation, not of emptiness but of fulness, not of deformity but of symmetry.

Many a man expends his moral energy in tearing down sins when he ought to be building up goodness. It is the story of the man who cast out one devil and into his empty house thronged seven others, so that his last state was worse than the first. Nature abhors a vacuum. The only way to overcome evil is to overcome

it with good. Finally, the same thing is true of religion. What religion desires is not a truncated piece of a man, but a whole man, healthy, happy, natural, and free. Religion is not a January thaw of sentimentalism, but a clear, vigorous, frosty morning, which stirs one's energy and steadies one's nerves. Religion means not less life but more life, not subtraction of power but multiplication of power, not emptiness but fulness. I remember hearing it said of Phillips Brooks that he seldom preached a sermon without using in it the word "richness," and it was certainly a word most characteristic of him. Life to that great prophet was ineffably rich, and to realize and share the richness of experience, to accept the rich privilege of life with a chaste body, an alert mind, a sensitive imagination, and a steady will—that was but to repeat the great promise of this passage, "Ye are complete in him."

The "Filling-Up"

"He had the outline of a good frame, but it was miserably deficient in the filling-up," James Fenimore Cooper says of an eccentric character in one of his sea tales. This bit of terse description refers to Ithuel Bolt's body, of course, but might it not apply just as aptly to that part of a man that the eye never sees?

"Harry Ames is the best-hearted fellow in town—there isn't anything in the world he wouldn't do for you, if he could—but—" Perhaps Harry's apologist goes on to say that, with all his generosity and kindness of heart, Harry lacks "push," and never "sticks long at any one thing"; and possibly he adds that Harry is rather self-indulgent and too easily led away into evil courses. In other words, young Ames was "cut out" for a fine type of man, but the strong side of his character has never been "filled up." On the score of quick sympathies and practical helpfulness, he is a great deal nearer Christ's ideal than many others, but the stable qualities of manhood are sadly lacking.

John Stafford is just the other way. He is the sort some people call "straight," and as correct in his conduct as a young man can well be. He never gives an inch on what he thinks is right.

The boys do not go much with John, though—they do not seem to care to. To speak frankly, the gentler side of John's nature has never been filled up. His character is rock-ribbed, but there is not soil enough on the surface for flowers to grow on, and no one is much attracted by his cold uprightness. He judges everyone by his own high standards, and if they do not "come up to the scratch," he is inclined to be severe in his judgment.

A one-sided character is misleading. It puts too strong an emphasis on its own defects. The gospel provides for a symmetrical life, a mere outline at first, that grows in substance and completeness by the discipline of obedience and service. To contract or distort the perfect pattern in Christ, by reason of a faint heart or in deference to ideas of our own, is disloyalty to the Master. Our business is to "fill up" in ourselves "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," faithfully strengthening the weakest point, carefully rounding out the side that is lacking. An overdeveloped righteousness cannot supply the lack of mercy and compassion, nor can kindness and gentleness make up for a faltering rectitude.—The Youth's Companion.

We must Pay the Price for Growth in Christ

One of the tragedies of life is that people stop their spiritual lives from growing while their bodies and minds keep on growing. Numbers of young people go to college, and park their religion outside, and let their religious development remain at sixteen while their minds go on to twenty. They let their bodies move on into the heat of athletic life and full development while their religion is undeveloped back home.

We never get a religious life that is worth while without paying for it. You do not get automatically gifted or automatically educated religiously; you get it because you go after it. You can no more be a great Christian without practise than you can learn to play the piano without practise. If you want a religious life that is happy and contented and efficient and powerful, you must pay the price for nurturing your soul, for developing your soul, for spreading it out, so to speak, where the influences of God can fall upon it.—A. W. Beaven.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The moral menace of yellow journalism. Bad books of today that should be burned.

2. Our duty as Christians to grow in grace and knowledge.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What led Paul to write his Hymn of Love? 2. Give a definition of love. 3. What different kinds of love are there? 4. Of what kind of love is Paul speaking? 5. Why does the Revised Version use the word *love* where the Authorized Version has *charity?* 6. Why does Paul say, "If I speak," rather than "If you speak"? 7. What is meant by "the tongues of men and of angels"? 8. What is the meaning of the last clause of 13.1? 9. What does "faith so as to remove mountains" mean? 10. What does Lowell say about the gift without the giver? 11. In what ways is love expressing itself in the life of noble men and women today? 12. Read Henry Drummond's Love the Greatest Thing in the World.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

OUTGROWING SUPERSTITION

Beginning the Lesson

Do you think of school as a place of leisure? Yet *leisure* is the original meaning of the Greek word from which our word *school* is derived. The way in which the word came into use is interesting. All Greek cities had their "gymnasia" which were originally intended for exercise and athletic sports. There one found running and wrestling grounds, gardens and walks. The Greeks lived out of doors more than we do, and it became the custom for a philosopher or grammarian or poet to go regularly to a gymnasium and, gathering about himself a group of listeners, either stand in a corner and talk, or walk up and down and talk. It became a favorite way of killing time to listen to such teachers. Halls and colonnades were built and seats provided for such discourses. The important work of the day was over at noon, and the leisure time was spent in these places of recreation, hence the word *scholé* (school) was given to such discourses, and then to the place where the discourses were given. After all, *leisure time* is not an unfitting term to use for our places of instruction, for you scholars go to school during your years of leisure, when there is nothing else so important for you to do as to spend your time in learning.

A Great Bonfire

A wonderful sight is a big fire! It thrills us all. Old and young stop in the street at the sound of the fire-gong and watch the speeding of engines and trucks down the street. All who can, follow till they reach the fire. Thrilling, too, is a big bonfire. One of the customs at many colleges on the night before commencement is the feeding of college books to a huge fire. It signifies the end of the old and the beginning of the new life.

One of the great bonfires of history took place in Ephesus in the middle of the first century A. D. It was a huge fire in the market-place, but the significance of it was even greater than the blaze. It meant that men and women were giving up their old ideas and accepting new ones. What brought this about?

Magical and Supersitious Acts Today

When we read the thrilling story of Paul at Ephesus, how he taught the people till those superstitious men and women came bringing their books of magic to be burned, we applaud both the converts and Paul, for we are glad that those Ephesians who practised magical art outgrew their superstition. When we read of the superstition of the Africans, again we say that to be a Christian one must give up false ideas and accept the truth.

But do we stop to think that we, too, may be superstitious? Do we think of superstition as wrong?

We think scornfully of the magicians of ancient Ephesus and their dupes, but we ourselves are living in an era of credulity when any one who claims to practise the occult can get a hearing. Every big city has its hundreds of palmists, phrenologists, graphologists, astrologists, clairvoyants, crystal gazers, soothsayers, and so on, who have numbers of waiting clients before their inner shrines. The amazing thing is that among the clients are often found members of our Christian churches. As Dr. Charles E. Jefferson tells us, "It was by a sure instinct that the church of the New Testament set its face as a flint against the magic of that day. And the good sense of civilized man all over the world attests the feeling which the apostles and the early Christians manifested against philandering with 'occult' things. Experience has shown with sufficient frequence and sufficient clearness that character deteriorates

under such experiments; that spirituality suffers; that God becomes more and more remote, more impersonal, less, in a word, God; and the practises of 'magic' are precisely those which charlatanry, quackery, and imposture love best, through which they are able to dominate and swindle at will."

In the city of Reading, Pa., a very few years ago, persons went to court and charged their neighbors with being witches. Children fell sick and their parents rushed for a "witch doctor," who told them someone had "verhexed" the children. The treatment consisted in chanting mystic words while passing a red cotton cord over the body.

Soldiers in the Great War had their mascots—a dog, or goat or other animal—and they regarded them as harbingers of "good luck." German soldiers, some of them, carried a charm in the shape of "a powerful prayer" that was expected to ward off every conceivable ill.

It is not the uncivilized of other lands and the ignorant, uneducated people of our own land alone who are superstitious today. A few years ago a man who believed that "we are all of us—or almost all of us—more or less superstitious," questioned a big group of normal school pupils and found that forty-five per cent of them acknowledged some superstitious belief. What is still more surprising, in a group of professors and their assistants at Harvard University, seventy-three per cent confessed that in their daily life they had little habits and customs indicating that, whether consciously or unconsciously, they were under superstitious influence.

Anyone who habitually refrains from starting on a journey on Friday, who will not be one of thirteen to sit down at a table, who invariably picks up a pin, or knocks on wood, etc., etc., thereby testifies to some degree of faith in the efficacy of these practises, to some lurking desire to "be on the safe side, and take no chances." Is not such a person, if a Christian, as reprehensible as an untutored African with his fetish, or a cultured pagan Athenian of Paul's day with his "Ephesian letters"?

A Remarkable Service in Birmingham, England

At a Sunday-school festival in connection with Carr'slane Church and its missions there were over three thousand children and adults gathered to listen to an address from Dr. J. H. Jowett. He held his audience spell-bound. He began by referring to the days when men brought things which Christ would not like and made a bonfire of them, and then he uncovered a brazier filled with sticks and coal, and proceeded to burn up, figuratively, some of the evil things in the human hearts before him which Christ would like to destroy.

A little boy of eight was called to the platform, and Dr. Jowett took from him a white envelope in which was found a black seed: that stood for a bad motive, hidden away under a good deed.

He put them in the brazier. Then came a girl with a package of thistledown; that represented idle wishes, such as, "I wish I were Queen Mary," and these, too, needed to be burned. Next followed a girl with a basket of falsehood picked up in the school playground, at home, in the shop. Yet another pupil came forward with a small box labelled "Treasures collected from rich and poor." The preacher lifted out a red monster called Revenge, a green monster called Jealousy, and a black creature called Malice, all of which were consigned to the fire. From a book handed to him by a boy Dr. Jowett obtained a tiny phial of poison which he consigned to the flames.

Would any of these things which Dr. Jowett found be lurking in our hearts? Would there be found other things that should be burned? What?

Sentence Sermons

Superstition is the religion of feeble minds.—Edmund Burke.

Persons who are superstitious about the number thirteen should remember the thirteen original states; they have done pretty well.—The Youth's Companion.

To be fettered by any form of superstition is unbecoming in a Christian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What does Paul say love will not do? 2. What does Paul say love will do? 3. What does Paul say in our text about patience? Humility? Courtesy? Unselfishness? Good temper? 4. Commit to memory our verses from the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. 5. Give the two great commandments which Jesus gave. 6. What does Peter say about love in 1 Pet. 4.8?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

GOLDEN TEXT: Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.13

LESSON 1 Corinthians 12-14 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 John 4.7-16

1 CORINTHIANS 12.4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.

31 But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.

13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging symbol. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away.

13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE DIVERSE, BUT THE SPIRIT IS THE SAME, 12.4-7. There was rivalry among the Corinthians as to which of them possessed the greatest gifts for God's service. "The tendency at Corinth was to estimate spiritual gifts by their showy rather than their solid character." The reverse was Paul's way.

"The things we consider most remarkable may, after all, be least important. An ecstasy is pleasant, but strength to endure with fidelity is more significant. The touchstone and test of our Christianity is our avowal of Jesus Christ. If in our souls we own him Lord we are possessed of the Spirit of Life" (John Gardner).

There are different gifts, Paul wrote the Corinthians, but the same Spirit reveals himself in them all; there are different ways of ministration, but back of them all is the same Lord; there are different sorts of activities, but they are all wrought by the same God. To each one is given his manifestation of the Spirit for the good of others.

Then in verses seven to eleven Paul mentions various spiritual gifts and repeats that, different as they are, they are alike in source, the Spirit apportioning them as he wills. Paul does not disparage spiritual gifts, he realizes their value, but he realizes also the need of unity and co-operation in the church, and this he enforces in verses 12-30, by his figure of the body and its members; as all of the members are different but essential to the body, so is it with the church and its members.

II. COVET THE GREATER GIFTS, 12.31. Set your hearts on the higher talents. And yet I will go on to show you a still higher path (Moffatt's translation). "To have gifts is good, but still more important is it to use them in the spirit of love," and this the apostle proceeds to show in his next words.

"Paul was an educated man addressing educated men, and he would be the last to depreciate the gifts of learning which a scholar should covet. 'Desire the best of such gifts,' he says. 'Give yourself with fidelity to your education. Let the physician seek the gifts of healing, and the politician the gifts of government, and the preacher the gifts of tongues. Yet there is something better than these best gifts. Beyond the best gifts lies a more excellent way.' And what is this which is better than the best? It is, answers the next chapter, the capacity for sympathy, the gift of human sensibility, the crowning virtue which Paul calls love. If this which lies beyond one's special calling be lost, if one's devotion to his own task rob him of social sensitiveness, then, however learned he may become, he is in fact nothing more than sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. He blows, as

we should say, his own trumpet and beats his own big drum" (Francis G. Peabody).

III. LOVE IS ESSENTIAL, 13.1-3. *Love* is used throughout the Revised Version where *charity* is used in the King James' Version. Charity was a good translation of the Greek word *agape* when the earlier version was made, but we now use it only to express liberality toward those in need, or liberalness in judging others.

Emotional gifts—the speaking with the tongues of men and of angels—Paul says are valueless without love. The word translated "tongues" means primarily "ecstatic utterances." "A modern musician has written songs without words: this is a very apt description of the peculiar kind of spiritual emotion called in the New Testament 'speaking with tongues.' Probably the nearest approach to it that most Christians make is when they are carried away by the feeling of a revival meeting. In Mr. Moody's revival meetings the church was full of men who floated, so to speak, on a wave of emotion; an unutterable joy in the redeeming love of God seemed to sustain their life; it was full, as they would have said in the early days, of people speaking with tongues" (James Denney).

Emotional gift without love is as valueless as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Trumpets and cymbals were used in pagan temples to produce deafening noises. The illustration was probably adopted from the shrill, discordant noise made by the speakers with their tongues, each endeavoring to drown the voices of all the others, as seems from 1 Cor. 14.23 to have been the case with the Corinthians.

"It is not the steam which is blown off with a loud noise, and is visible for a moment in dense, white clouds, which drives the engine; it is the steam in the boiler, which is subject to intense pressure, and is neither heard nor seen" (James Denney).

Paul next enumerates *intellectual* gifts—the gift of prophecy, the knowledge of mysteries and all knowledge, and the most perfect faith—and declares that if their possessor lacks love he is nothing. Note the contrast between what a man has and what he is: he may *have* extraordinary gifts, but he *is* nothing.

Practical gifts likewise are valueless without love. Great sacrifices for the poor, even martyrdom (whose motive may be only self-glorification), if not inspired by love for Christ and his cause, have no value in God's sight. Others may benefit from loveless gifts, but not the giver himself. Recall how Lowell in his vision of Sir Launfal shows that the value of a deed of charity depends upon the love back of it.

"It's not what you give but what you share
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE, 13.4-7. "As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red and blue and yellow and violet and orange and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the Spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love" (Henry Drummond).

"Will you notice that the elements of love have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day, that they are things which can be practised by every man in everyplace in life; and how, by a multitude of small things and ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the summum bonum, is made up?" (Henry Drummond).

Love suffereth long and is kind. Compare Prov. 10.12; 17.9. *Suffereth long* translates a Greek word which means literally "long-minded." "Homes where one hundred is counted before the angered person speaks are in the line of long-mindedness. Long-mindedness is far-away anticipation; it is seeing matters as they will appear next season; it is considering how petty the feeling of hatred may seem years hence—or when the perplexity is past" (J. G. K. McClure). "Love will stand at the door and knock long after dignity has fallen asleep on the threshold" (Joseph Parker).

"'Tis something, when the day draws to its close,
To say, 'Tho' I have borne a burdened mind,

**Have tasted neither pleasure nor repose,
Yet this remains—to all men, friends or foes,
I have been kind'"** (W. J. Dawson).

Notice that in verses 4, 5 and 6 there are eight negative statements.

How much a life of love consists in not doing things!

Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs (Moffatt's translation). Recall Tennyson's beautiful words:

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

Love is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful. "Courtesy is love in little things." Love does not write upon a mental ledger the insults and injuries it receives. "Love taketh no account of evil—much less repeats it."

"Love is not easily provoked. The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous. It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. No form of vice—not worldliness, not greed of gold, not dumbness itself—does more to un-Christianize society than evil temper. For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom off childhood, in short, for sheer gratuitous, misery-producing power, this influence stands alone" (Henry Drummond).

Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness. Love is never glad when others go wrong (Moffatt's translation). There are self-righteous people who take pleasure in considering the faults of others. Recall the Pharisee's prayer, Lk. 18.11.

"Have we ever reflected why evil news flies more swiftly than good? When we hear some scandal we pass it on with some such preamble as this, "You will be sorry to hear about so-and-so"; and we are sorry, no doubt, but not altogether. It gives us some satisfaction to spread it. It is news; the fact that someone has done well is not so exciting; it falls flat; it is not news. There can be little doubt that human nature takes a certain pleasure in hearing that others go wrong. A statesman is under a cloud; do we not feel a certain pleasure in all this, and if the man is completely cleared are we not a little disappointed, especially if he happens to be a member of another party? If, however, we were Christians after the manner of the teaching given here, we should take no joy in such a scandal, we should refuse to believe it until it were proved up to the hilt; if it were disproved we should exult, and all the more if the accused were not with us" (Edward Shillito).

Love rejoiceth with the truth, rejoices to see truth and right prevail. Love is gladdened by goodness (Moffatt's translation). "It includes the sincerity of purpose which endeavors to see things as they are, and rejoices to find them better than suspicion feared or calumny denounced" (Henry Drummond).

"If we have the love of Christ in our hearts it will give us a thrill of delight to discover the least trace of his presence in human lives. To be a specialist in goodness, to know it even when it is half hidden, to rejoice in it, as a collector rejoices in a picture or a chair or a rare book, this is a career for love" (Edward Shillito).

Love beareth all things . . . endureth all things. The Greek word translated *endureth* means primarily to hold fast like a water-tight vessel, to let nothing escape: love does not let others know what it has to endure. Love is always slow to expose, always patient (Moffatt's translation).

Love believeth all things, hopeth all things. We may take this to mean that Love believes in the one loved, and when such love is no longer possible, hopes. But Dr. Moffatt's translation gives a different thought: Love is always eager to believe the best; always hopeful.

"Paul is thinking of love looking out upon this great world of ours with all its sorrow and its suffering and its sin; all its joy and its ambition and its hope, and he insists that it must believe the very best of it all that it possibly can. In other words, Paul believes that love must ever be an optimist, and that its whole spirit and attitude

toward life will be that of one to whom the good is not only possible but in the end inevitable."

Professor Ramsay calls attention to the rich vocabulary which Paul employs and to his great carefulness in regard to the delicate shades of significance in this series of words of verses 4-7, and observes that only a person who is accustomed to think much and to philosophize can practise such refinement in language.

V. LOVE IS LASTING, verses 8-13. The natural desire of the heart is for that which will survive as long as personality abides, through all eternity, and this, Paul assures us, we have in love. Returning to the comparison of love with the special gifts of tongues, prophecies, and knowledge, he affirms that the latter are temporary gifts, while love is eternal.

"*Knowledge* here refers, not to the abstract principle, which will never pass away, but to the superiority of knowledge possessed now by an individual." Love never faileth. The Greek reads literally, Love faileth—no, never.

But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three are eternal: faith in God will be ours throughout eternity; the eternal life is one of progress, and there will still be room for hope for future good; and love never faileth.

"The attitude of expectancy is an attitude of the soul for ever. In the next world, as in this one, we shall go on hoping. There will always be something ahead of us to look forward to, always something better than anything we have experienced, always something higher than any height to which we have attained, always something more glorious than anything we have yet known" (Charles E. Jefferson).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal, 13.1. There is an Arabic saying that "Every land has its style." It is certainly true to a large extent that every land has certain characteristic sounds and scenes, and even odors, which distinguish it from other lands.

One of the things which attract the attention of the occidental in his first visit to the lands of the Near East is the metallic clink of brass cups against each other as the vender of cool drinks makes his way along the crowded streets shouting his offer of refreshing drinks to the thirsty pedestrians. Over his shoulder will be hung a receptacle, it may be of skin, or of glass, and brass-trimmed, while in front will be slung a number of glass tumblers and in the hand will be two brass cups, which are skilfully rattled against each other so as to attract attention.

It is such a common thing as to be at once recalled by any oriental hearing or reading the words of Paul, and while so thoroughly characteristic of everyday life, it would be recognized also as a thing of no intrinsic value.—William S. Nelson, in The Sunday School World.

If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, 13.2. This was a proverbial expression for "to accomplish great things." Many of the rabbis were termed "rooters up of mountains" because they were dexterous in removing difficulties, solving perplexing questions, etc. This is the sense in which Christ's words in Mt. 21.21 are to be understood. "He that hath faith will get through any difficulty and perplexity; mountains will become mole hills or plains before him."

If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, 13.3. Literally, "Though I dole away in mouthfuls all my property or estates." Who that has witnessed the alms-giving in a Catholic monastery, or the court of a Spanish or Sicilian bishop's or archbishop's palace, where immense revenues are syringed away in farthings to herds of beggers, but must feel the force of the apostles' half satirical word?—John Massie, in The New Century Bible.

If I give my body to be burned, 13.3. There is a story told of a Hindu, who shortly before this burnt himself in the market place at Athens to show what he would do for his religion. His tomb was apparently shown, and Paul may have seen it.—Westminster Commentary.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What lessons have we already had from First Corinthians? Where was Paul when

he wrote this letter? Why did he write it? What problems did he settle for his readers in our earlier lesson?

Spiritual Gifts

As we have already seen, they were jealous of one another in the church at Corinth. Many of them aspired to be conspicuous figures in the church. Some could teach, some could heal—which had the greater gift? Bitter arguments, sharp words, wasted energy resulted from their contentions. In chapter twelve Paul argues that there are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is the same; in chapter fourteen, that the gift of prophecy is better than the gift of tongues; but in the midst of these arguments he suddenly stops and writes chapter thirteen. It is as if the pity of it all overwhelms him. "See," he writes, "covet earnestly the best gifts," and always remember that there is "a more excellent way"; and then he contrasts the spirit they are showing with a spirit guided by love, teaches them what they would and would not do if love actuated all their actions, shows them how superior love is to all else.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Of all the Scout Troops in A——, Troop Thirty was the best, not only in numbers but in spirit and efficiency. It proudly numbered eight Eagle Scouts. Older boys who were reluctant to give up scouting formed a Senior Patrol. Their scout-master was a young man of little education who to adults seemed to possess many of the faults of youth, but the boys admired and loved him and his influence was boundless. When one of the boys of another troop asked Jim Andrews why Mr. E—— was so successful, Jim replied: "You see we all like him and would do anything for him, because he likes us and would do anything for us." That being translated is, "We love him because he loves us." A primary law of teaching is the law of love.

"There is a story of a brilliant and eloquent minister whose work was failing to be genuinely productive in spite of all his gifts. He was telling a friend about all his hard and ineffective labor for his people. At last the friend looked up and said, 'You have done a great deal for them. But have you loved them?' That one question penetrated to the cause of his failure. He went back to add to his gift of service a soul of love. And now a golden harvest rewarded all his sowing and tending of his field."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Beginning the Lesson

We study today the best-loved passage in all Paul's writings, and one of the finest passages in all literature. In this great hymn of love Paul does not give us a definition, but a conception, of love. This Percy C. Ainsworth points out in his foreword to his study of the hymn. He says:

"Here in this great chapter there are no analyses, no abstractions, no speculations. Here is all the murmur and the color of life. We are not asked to ponder love that haply we may by and by think some clear thought about it. We are not asked to study love as an abstraction. We are asked to walk with love, a kindly, kingly presence, to hear how love says the thing that must be said day by day, to see how love does the thing that must be endured day by day, to watch how love stoops low beneath its brother's burden, and keeps that silence that is more availing than speech. Surely this is the best way to come at love's true meaning—indeed, to come to the true meaning of anything. To find out what life is we watch what life does."

An Appreciation of the Thirteenth of First Corinthians

This is Paul's masterpiece. It is one of the few Pauline passages which stand on a level with the words of Jesus. It is one of the brightest jewels of the Christian religion. It is a world classic, and will outlive all the classics of Greece and Rome. Its language is so rhythmic that it has become the fashion to call it a song, or a hymn. It is not a poem, but it has in it the subtle music of a poet's heart. It is the noblest description of love ever penned, and will be treasured as long as mankind prizes things that are beautiful.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

The Meaning of Christian Love

Few words are so soiled and spoiled in our religious vocabulary as *love* is. It has been sentimentalized till it has roused suspicion in the minds of many.

It has lost much of its real meaning by the habit of people identifying it with kindness, affability, or good humor. The high ethical demand of love has been lost sight of.

We want to recall the definition of Christian love as "devotion to the ends of God in human personality." Let us start from that definition, and in working it out we shall see that in this sense love is greater than any other power in life.

Love is devotion to the ends of God in human personality. When we love our fellows we recognize in them ends of God. Every man or woman in our fellowship is under the purpose and providence of God. He has ends of his own in them as much as in ourselves, and when he brings us together it is to further these ends. Love is not the mere desire to enjoy the company of the like-minded, nor is it to make things comfortable for them. Love has a deep moral and spiritual purpose. It implies that we recognize steadily in other people the divine gift of personality, and that we do nothing to injure them. Cynicism and selfishness are ruled out. Also we must study other people intelligently, to see how we can forward God's ends in them. Some need encouragement, some require warning, and all have the right to self-sacrifice from us. In our varied relationships we need to think carefully about others if we are to love them truly; otherwise we may be severe when we ought to be gentle, or gentle when we ought to be severe.

Love, in this searching sense, is a heroic demand on our imagination and sympathy. It sometimes means, for example, that we have to enter into the difficulties and needs of people in social position very different from our own; it carries us over all barriers of class distinction and racial animosity. It means that we must persist in believing that certain people are capable of a divine calling, though they themselves are indifferent to any such consideration. Ours it may be to waken them to self-respect, to a sense of what they mean to God. In all sorts of ways this love draws us into human service. "Devotion to the ends of God in human personality" involves constant thought, and intense belief in human nature, and a steady consecration of ourselves to the aim of raising and training others to this divine calling in this world.

Leaf of a Roman Diptych

The central figure in the upper group and the left-hand figure in the middle group represent Paul.

In theory we may grant this, but the difficulty lies in practise. It is hard to be patient sometimes, to overlook injuries, to put down wounded self-love, to forgive, to bear with stupid, slow, unsteady characters. It is hard to extend such generous feelings beyond the circle of those who are kin and kind to another. Yet this is the demand of our Lord upon his followers, upon those who are members of his body.

And as we set ourselves to comply with the demand, we come to see why love is greater than even faith or hope.

Love, as God sets it before us, means that instead of thinking, "What am I to get out of this?" we instinctively think, "What can I put into this relationship? What am I meant to bring out of these people's lives?"

It is only as this temper prevails that men live together on the highest level, and it is as such a temper overcomes our natural selfishness that the success of any fellowship, from the church to the League of Nations, is assured.—Condensed from a Sermon in the Record of Christian Work by James Moffatt.

How to Learn to Love

Is life not full of opportunities for learning love? Every man and woman every day has a thousand of them. The world is not a playground; it is a schoolroom. Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is how better we can love. What makes a man a good artist, a good sculptor, a good musician? Practise. What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practise. What makes a man a good man? Practise. Nothing else. There is nothing capricious about religion. We do not get the soul in different ways, under different laws, from those in which we get the body and the mind. If a man does not exercise his arm he develops no biceps muscle; and if a man does not exercise his soul, he acquires no muscle in his soul, no strength of character, no vigor of moral fiber, nor beauty of spiritual growth. Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development. And the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practise.

Do not quarrel therefore with your lot in life. Do not complain of its never-ceasing cares, its petty environment, the vexations you have to stand, the small and sordid souls you have to live and work with. Above all, do not resent temptation; do not be perplexed because it seems to thicken round you more and more, and ceases neither for effort nor for agony nor prayer. That is your practise. That is the practise which God appoints you; and it is having its work in making you patient, and humble, and generous, and unselfish, and kind, and courteous. Do not grudge the hand that is moulding the still too shapeless image within you. It is growing more beautiful, though you see it not, and every touch of temptation may add to its perfection. Therefore keep in the midst of life. Do not isolate yourself. Be among men, and among things, and among troubles, and difficulties, and obstacles. Talent develops itself in solitude—the talent of prayer, of faith, of meditation, of seeing the unseen; Character grows in the stream of the world's life. That chiefly is where men are to learn love.—Henry Drummond in The Greatest Thing in the World.

A Helpful Suggestion from Henry Drummond

How many of you will join me in reading this chapter once a week for the next three months? A man did that once and it changed his whole life. Will you do it? It is for the greatest thing in the world. You might begin by reading it every day, especially the verses which describe the perfect character. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself." Get these ingredients into your life. Then everything that you do is eternal.

It is worth doing. It is worth giving time to. No man can become a saint in his sleep; and to fulfil the condition required demands a certain amount of prayer and meditation and time, just as improvement in any direction, bodily or mental, requires preparation and care. Address yourselves to that one thing; at any cost have this transcendent character exchanged for yours.

You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love. As memory scans the past, above and beyond all the transitory pleasures of life, there leap forward those supreme hours when you have been enabled to do unnoticed kindnesses to those round about you, things too trifling to speak about but which you feel have entered into your eternal life. I have seen almost all the beautiful things God has made; I have enjoyed almost every pleasure that he has planned for man; and yet as I look back I see standing out above all the life that has gone, four or five short experiences when the love of God reflected itself in some poor imitation, some small act of love of mine, and these seem to be the things which alone of all one's life abide. Everything else in all our lives is transitory. Every other good is visionary. But the acts of love which no man knows about, or can ever know about—they never fail.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The reverse of love for others is egotism. Is the statement true that "the egotist cannot love"?

2. The place of faith, hope and love in the life of a Christian. Paul's faith, hope, love. See Chapters XXI, XXII, and XXIII of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why was Paul desirous of securing a larger collection from the churches he had founded in Gentile communities for the poor in the church at Jerusalem? 2. Why were there so many poor Christians at Jerusalem? 3. Is it right to stimulate giving through competition in giving? 4. What great collections for the poor were made in our country during and after the Great War? 5. In what benefactions is our class interested? 6. Would our giving satisfy Paul? 7. What place in your budget have Christian benevolences?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

Love Doth not Behave Itself Unseemly

That means that love does not do things that it is ashamed of later. When love is in the heart there will be no rudeness in the manner. Love will cause us to be so interested in those about us that we shall be concerned for their welfare. Even the poorest and lowliest will have our respect. We shall feel solicitous for the worst of those about us. When there comes the time that we are unmindful of the rights and well-being of others, it is high time that we looked to our own lives. When incivility and indifference are coming in, love is going out.—Zion's Herald.

Love Suffereth long, and is Kind

A number of years ago a young thief was caught in the act of robbing the home of Edward Everett Hale. Dr. Hale took an active part in having the burglar committed to the reformatory. He believed that the law ought to be vindicated, but he did not fail to care for the youthful criminal. Busy as he was, he took time every week to write to the thief. When the three years were up he secured a good position for the former lawbreaker. The young burglar, who had come to recognize Dr. Hale as his truest friend, went into the new position, proved himself worthy of it, and became a useful, honest, self-respecting man. A weak mercy might have let him sink back into crime, but loving justice saved him.—The Convention Teacher.

Love is Kind

"The greatest things a man can do for his Heavenly Father," someone says, "is to be kind to some of his Father's other children." I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are? How much the world needs it. How easily it is done. How instantaneously it acts. How infallibly it is remembered. How superabundantly it pays itself back—for there is no debtor in the world so honorable, so perfectly honorable, as Love.—Henry Drummond.

Love is Courteous

Courtesy is love in society, love in relation to etiquette. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. And the one secret of politeness is to love. Love cannot behave itself unseemly. You can put the most untutored persons into the highest society, and if they have a reservoir of love in their heart, they will not behave themselves unseemly. They simply cannot do it. Carlyle said of Robert Burns that there was no truer gentleman in Europe than the ploughman-poet. It was because he loved everything—the mouse, and the daisy, and all the things, great and small, that God had made. So with this simple passport he could mingle with any society, and enter courts and palaces from his little cottage on the banks of the Ayr. You know the meaning of the word "gentleman." It means a gentle man—a man who does things gently with love. And that is the whole art and mystery of it. The gentle man cannot in the nature of things do an ungentle, an ungentlemanly thing. The ungentle soul, the inconsiderate, unsympathetic nature cannot do anything else. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly."—Henry Drummond, in The Greatest Thing in the World.

Love in Action

You remember the boy who had an apple and the boy who had not. The one pleaded for just a bite, but was gruffly refused. Then he begged for the core, but the other replied, "There ain't going to be no core." There was a core to that boy's heart, and we have no difficulty in finding a name for it—selfishness. We may be perfectly sure that, not only in the case of the apple, but in every case, big or little, the same spirit will rule, will dictate the speech and action. That is his disposition. It will be selfishness all through. He will probably succeed in life in the estimation of this world, but it will be a success based upon a galling, embittering selfishness.

You remember also the other story in which the big lad offered his little friend the first bite of the apple he had found, and when the child took but a tiny piece, he cried, almost indignantly, "Bite bigger, Billy," as though his generosity was hurt at being taken on such a low level. I have no hesitation in calling that lad a "gentleman." You forget the gutter, you forget the rough manner of his speech. You forget his rags, and say that in God's sight—and I suppose no one else counts—you say that in God's sight he was a "gentleman," because he had the spirit, the disposition, the soul of one.

"Now," says Paul, "let us get down to the springs of action." Why do you think in the way you do? Why do you speak in the way you do? Why do you act as you do? It is that unseen spirit within which dictates everything. If the fountain is sweet, the waters will be sweet.—W. J. Farrow.

The Telescope of Love

There is not such a thing as looking at life through plain glass; we always see things through a lens of some sort.

We can magnify blessings as well as hardships and difficulties; we can minimize blessings as well as troubles. God has given us that power so that we shall not be the slaves of our surroundings.

There is a telescope that will help those of us who are looking at life in the wrong way. It is the Telescope of Love, and it closely resembles an ordinary telescope of glass and metal. We can look through either end of it and get the same results that we get with the ordinary telescope. If we look through the small end, objects are magnified and are brought close, so that we feel like stretching out our hands to touch them. If we look through the large end, the distance is magnified and the objects seem far away and very small. When we look through this Telescope of Love in the proper way, things and people are brought close to us. They are given a place in our lives, although before they may have seemed too distant to be interesting.

How impossible it is for vision and selfishness to go together! Putting the wrong end of the telescope to our eyes makes ourselves so big in comparison with everything else about us that we forget that there are others in the world worth caring about. So we sacrifice everyone else to our own selfish ends, not realizing that they are friends close enough to touch if we were to turn the telescope and look aright.

That is the Telescope of Love which God has placed within us, making it possible for us to get close to the world of persons about us, and to see in them good and interesting things. It makes it possible for us to enjoy having a part in their lives and in helping to right things that have gone wrong with them. Selfishness causes us to belittle our fellow men; true love magnifies them.—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

Envy is a feeling of ill-will to those who are in the same line as ourselves, a spirit of covetousness and detraction.—Henry Drummond.

The glory of life is to love, not to be loved.—Hugh Black.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Where were the churches in Macedonia to which Paul refers as examples of generous liberality? 2. What interesting event connected with the founding of each have we studied? 3. What is said about the gathering of the collection for the poor Christians of Jerusalem in 1 Cor. 16.1; Rom. 15.25-28; Acts 24.17? 4. What counsel did Paul give the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 16.2 in regard to systematic giving? 5. By what parable did Jesus teach that giving to others is giving to God? (Mt. 25.31-46.) 6. Do you give gladly or grudgingly? Meanly or generously? Carelessly or lovingly? 7. What kind of giving honors God?

LESSON III—OCTOBER 21

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

GOLDEN TEXT: First they gave their own selves to the Lord. 2 Corinthians 8.5

LESSON 2 Corinthians 8.1-9.15 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 95.1-7a

2 CORINTHIANS 8.1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: 5 and *this,* not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. 6 Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also. 7 But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

9.6 But this *I say,* He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 *Let* each man *do* according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

15 Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN GENEROSITY GIVEN BY THE CHURCHES IN MACEDONIA, 8.1-5. Paul calls to the mind of his readers, the Christians of Corinth, the example in generosity of the Macedonians (the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa), and ascribes the latter's large collection for the poor at Jerusalem to God, whose grace, or love, moved them to generosity. Affliction which had put their Christian character to the proof (1 Thess. 2.14), their overflowing joy (1 Thess. 1.6) and their dire poverty, had resulted in spiritual riches, great liberality. For they gave willingly as they were able, and indeed more than they were able, as he, Paul, could testify. Perhaps Paul had at first thought the Macedonians too poor themselves to share in this collection, for he now says that they begged the privilege of joining in this grace and fellowship. "The contribution of the Macedonian Christians was really comparable to the giving of the widow's mite."

"Strange to say, it is not those to whom the gospel comes easily, and on whom it imposes little, who are most generous in its cause. On the contrary, it is those who have suffered for it, those who have lost by it, who are as a rule most open-handed. Comfort makes men selfish, even though they are Christian; but if they are Christian, affliction, even to the spoiling of their goods, teaches them generosity" (James Denney).

The collection was to minister to "the saints" (Paul's term for Christ's followers) at Jerusalem. There were several reasons for their poverty. "The religious prejudices of the Jews, amongst whom they lived, entailed upon them constant social persecution, even in times of comparative peace; the claims of Christian visitors upon their hospitality were heavy; the maintenance of the apostles and of a disproportionate number of Christian teachers threw on them an undue share of Christian burdens. But whatever the causes of their poverty, it was certainly chronic."

Paul explained to the Corinthians the method of the Macedonians: they first gave themselves to the Lord. And it was their devotion to Paul as well as to the Lord which led them to further his wish in the matter of the collection. "What Paul says is virtually this: 'We expected little from people so poor, but by God's will they literally put *themselves* at the service of the Lord, in the first instance, and of us as his administrators. They said to us, to our amazement and joy, "We are Christ's, and yours after him, to command in this matter." '"

"This is one of the finest and most inspiring experiences that a Christian minister can have, and, God be thanked, it is none of the rarest. Many a man has been startled and ashamed by the liberality of those from whom he

would not have ventured to beg. Many a man has been importuned to take what he could not have dared to ask. It is a mistake to refuse such generosity, to decline it as too much; it gladdens God and revives the heart of man. It is a mistake to deprive the poorest of the opportunity of offering this sacrifice of praise; it is the poorest in whom it has most munificence, and to whom it brings the deepest joy. Rather ought we to open our hearts to the impression of it, as to the workings of God's grace, and rouse our own selfishness to do something not less worthy of Christ's love" (James Denney).

"What a contrast between the giving of these early Christians and much painful raising of money that characterizes the methods of the modern church! Today collectors have to be appointed whose business it is to urge people to give. And many who have undertaken the painful task know how rare and refreshing it is to find a few souls who are really eager to give. Too often giving is the price paid for the maintenance of a decent appearance. The true ideal is ever that of realizing the opportunity to give as one of fellowship in the power of grace. This realization only comes, therefore, to such as have first given themselves. If self is given, nothing is withholden. If self be refused, then the perpetual effort is to retain as much as possible for self, giving only what is necesssary to escape the criticism of others" (G. Campbell Morgan).

II. THE CHURCH AT CORINTH URGED TO BE LIBERAL LIKEWISE, 8.6-9. "We urged Titus who had already made a beginning (some preliminary arrangements about the matter. Possibly this was the visit referred to in 12.18), to carry to a completion this grace of liberality in you also," said Paul.

Then Paul encouraged the Corinthians by speaking in praise of their faith and testimony and knowledge and earnestness (see 1 Cor. 1.5) and love for him, and urged them to show this grace of liberality also. " 'Enough of argument,' the apostle says: 'let Christians distinguished as you are in every respect—in faith and eloquence and knowledge and all sorts of zeal, and in the love that comes from you and abides in us—see that they are distinguished in this grace also' " (James Denney).

"I do not command you, but would put to the proof the sincerity of your love to us by comparing it with the earnestness of others (the Macedonians)," said Paul. Their attitude toward this collection for the poor tested the genuineness of their love. Should they fail to complete what they had begun, he would judge wholly insincere their protestations of affection for Christ and for himself, and for their fellow men.

A missionary worker declares that the man who prays "Thy Kingdom come" and does not give some just proportion of his income to promote the Kingdom, is a conscious or an unconscious hypocrite.

Paul has bethought himself of the highest example of love and self-sacrifice, and now observes parenthetically: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though he was rich (in spiritual gifts—the word *rich* is apparently used metaphorically), yet for our sakes he became poor (the word *poor* has its literal meaning), that ye through his poverty might become rich.

Another and more usual interpretation is expressed by Professor James Denney, who refers to the parallel passage in Phil. 2.5-8 and says: "The rich Christ is the pre-existent One, in the form of God, in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; he became poor when he became man. The poor men are those whose lot Christ came to share, and in consequence of that self-impoverishment of his they become heirs of a Kingdom."

"All true giving is at once a reflection of Christ's gift, and a response to it. Too often the whole matter of giving is regarded as a burdensome and irksome duty, to be avoided if possible. When, however, the great light of Christ's example shines upon it, it is seen as a very vital part of Christian life, and is revealed in all the beauty of an unspeakable privilege" (J. Stewart Holden).

"This text, verse 9, from bringing forward prominently the fact of our Lord's poverty as an example, gave rise to the Mendicant Orders, as founded by St. Francis of Assisi, who in this respect believed himself to be following the model of our

Savior's life. Such a result is doubly curious. It shows how a parenthesis, incidentally introduced in an appeal, for a temporary purpose, to the generosity of the Corinthian Church, has given birth to an immense institution, at one time spread over the whole of Europe. It shows how much of the extravagances of that institution might have been checked by acting less on the letter, and more on the spirit, of the passage in which the text occurs; a passage of which the general tendency is the very opposite to that which could reduce the feelings of generosity to a definite and uniform system" (Arthur M. Stanley).

III. THE REWARD OF LIBERALITY, 9.6-11. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully, declared Paul.

"If a man looks covetously at his pile of wheat and says, 'I cannot bear to waste this golden grain by casting it into the ground,' and sows but a little of it, hoarding the remainder, we know what the result will be. He will have but a scant harvest when the time comes, while the grain he hoarded will perhaps be wormeaten and destroyed. But on the other hand, if he scatters the precious grains broadcast over his field, though he seems to be robbing the garner, he will have a plentiful return in the harvest. Gifts and good deeds are seeds sown which will yield a harvest just as surely as the grains of wheat one may sow in his field. They will yield many different harvests. The blessings they carry to those who receive them is one harvest. Then the blessing that the mere act of giving brings back to the giver is another; for Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Through them will be the harvest gathered in the other world, when Jesus shall reward even the giving of a cup of cold water in his name. It is also true that the harvest will be small or large, just as the seed has been sparingly or liberally scattered. He who keeps and hoards loses, while he who scatters and dispenses holds. An old epitaph reads, 'What I gave I have; what I kept I lost'" (J. R. Miller).

Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: let each one give as much as his heart consents to his giving. Not grudgingly (the Greek *ek lupes* means literally *out of sorrow,* sorrowing, that is, for what must be given), or of necessity, the necessity of circumstances, constrained by Paul's urging, perhaps.

"Let us not give to God as we pay the income tax." There is a story of a stingy Scot who tossed a crown, thinking it a penny, into the plate at the church door. When he saw what he had done, he asked to have it back. The doorkeeper refused. "Aweel, aweel," the Scot grunted, "I'll get credit for it in heaven." "Na, na," said Jeems, the doorkeeper, "ye'll get credit for the penny."

For God loveth a cheerful giver. The Greek word translated "cheerful" is *hilaron,* which means *hilarious,* joyous.

"God loves a whole-souled 'hilarious' giver. To the sense of duty from the law of Christian service, shall we not, by God's help, add the crowning grace of spontaneous, hearty, hilarious Christian giving of time and money for the cause of our Master?" (M. E. Gates).

IV. THE MOTIVE FOR LIBERALITY: THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL, 9.15. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift, that gift whose value cannot be expressed in words. "The gift is just the collection viewed in this light, as a signal manifestation of the divine kindness, fraught with such far-reaching, happy consequences, inviting to such a vista of expectations," is the view of Allan Menzies to which many scholars subscribe. Most of us, however, believe with Dr. Charles Hodges that "God's unspeakable gift is his Son. This, according to the analogy of the Scripture, is that one great, supreme gift which is here intended. This is the more natural, because it is Paul's wont, when speaking either of the feeble love, or trivial gifts of believers, one to another, to refer in contrast to the infinite love and unspeakable gift of God in Christ to us, 2 Cor. 8.9; 1 Cor. 15.17; 1 Tim. 1.17. The passage therefore ought to stand, as we doubt not the great majority of the readers of the Bible understand it, as an outburst of gratitude to God for the gift of his Son."

"Lord, thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea.
So let me render back again
This millionth of thy gift. Amen" (Joyce Kilmer).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Their deep poverty, 8.2. The Romans had been very hard on these Macedonians; they had taken possession of the gold and silver mines which were rich sources of revenue, and had taxed the right of smelting copper and iron; they had also reserved to themselves the importation of salt and the felling of timber for building ships. The Macedonians said that their nation was like a lacerated and disjointed animal. On the top of this had come persecution in the case of the Christian converts. God had enabled these impoverished people to do great things for their fellow-Christians; no doubt with the grace of God, the Corinthians would do the like.—Alfred Plummer.

The riches of their liberality, 8.2. This is the testimony Aristides bore to the charity of the Christian in the time of Hadrian (117-138): "He who has, gives to him who has not without grudging; and when they see the stranger they bring him to their dwelling and rejoice over him as a true brother; for they do not call brothers those who are after the flesh, but those who are in the Spirit and in God; but when one of the poor passes away from the world, and any of them sees him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability, and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor or needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may provide the needy with their necessary food."

Fellowship in the ministering to the saints, 8.4. As a rule, the Pharisee of today is well to do, made so by the tithes and gifts that are sent from Hebrews in strange lands to be distributed among the poor, a large portion of which remains in the pocket of the Rabbi and Pharisee. The Jews of the cities of Palestine are, as a rule, lazy and unthrifty, being taught to be so from their infancy; for every man, woman and child, from the day of his birth to his death, receives a fund known as the Halooka, sent from all the Jews in the different parts of the world for the maintenance of their brethren in the Holy Land, for which they expect the residents of Canaan to pray for them, when near the Holy Places, and to be their proxy at their fast on the day of atonement and at their rejoicings on the day of the Passover. —Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward, in Palestine through the Eyes of a Native.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Where is Macedonia? What churches did Paul found in Macedonia? At the Conferences in Jerusalem, what was said to Paul about the poor? What gift for the poor which greatly pleased Jesus did we hear about in a lesson of the Second Quarter? What did Jesus tell the rich young ruler to do and why did Jesus ask him to do it? What sort of giving did Paul tell the Corinthians in Chapter thirteen is valueless to the giver?

From Ephesus to Macedonia

Two weeks ago we left Paul at Ephesus, and last week we studied his great hymn of love which he wrote while at Ephesus to the church he had founded at Corinth. Paul's preaching at Ephesus interfered with the profits of makers and sellers of shrines of Diana, the goddess of Ephesus, and the latter, under the leadership of Demetrius, a silversmith, assembled a mob in the theater that cried "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The riot led to Paul's leaving the city.

From Ephesus Paul went to Troas (2 Cor. 2.12), and then to Philippi, where Titus joined him and brought good news from the church at Corinth. Several months were spent in "these parts"—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from some city in Macedonia.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

See our Introduction.

The History of the Collection for the Poor at Jerusalem

Early in the Book of The Acts we are told that there was no one in the Christian church at Jerusalem who lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands and houses, sold them and brought the price received and laid it at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each according as anyone had need. Then when the number had increased and the work of caring for the poor took too much of the apostles' time, seven officers were appointed to see that no one suffered.

When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met the apostles for a conference in regard to the basis on which Gentile converts should be received into the church, the apostles impressed on Paul the duty of the Gentile churches of caring for the poor, "which very thing I was also zealous to do," Paul wrote the Galatians (2.10).

The maintenance of its own poor had been the care of each particular church, but Paul would have the churches realize the principle of universal brotherhood, and he made a careful plan for a great collection from many distant churches for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem. To the Corinthians he wrote in his First Epistle (16.1-5): "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia."

To the Corinthians Paul gave as a motive for liberal giving the example of Christ and their abundance compared with the want at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8.14), to the Romans (15.26, 27) he wrote that the churches of Macedonia and Achaia in making their gifts to the church at Jerusalem but paid a debt of gratitude due that church. His greatest motive in having the collection made, however, seems to have been to prove the fellowship of all believers, to unite Gentiles and Jews, between whom there was danger of jealousy and dissensions, through the giving of common sympathy and sharing of mutual help. Therefore the collection must be made publicly and impressively. "From Galatia, from Corinth and from Rome there flowed the gracious river of brotherly sentiment which makes glad the city of God," writes Dr. J. H. Jowett. "In all this there was something quite unique. It was a novelty in the history of the world. It was a beneficence that overflowed conventional boundaries. In earlier days there had been beneficence that was patriotic; now there arose beneficence that was human. It was not a sympathy of Jew with Jew, or of Roman with Roman, or of Greek with Greek. The race-lines crossed. It was a sympathy of Roman with Jew, of Gentile with Jew, of man with man, and this, I say, was a stupendous novelty in the intercourse of men. 'Henceforth there was neither Jew nor Gentile.' The stern, hoary race-limits were quite submerged in the voluminous sentiment of philanthropy born of a common faith in the redeeming Christ of God."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Here is a pregnant sentence from The Meaning of Service: "Wealth is a potential servant or destroyer of manhood, with almost magical power. To harness money for usefulness, to create the sense of stewardship in those who possess it, to educate all the people in the ministries to which it can be put, to redeem money from sordidness and to baptize it into the service of God and his children, this is one of the great tasks of the modern age."

And here is a practical lesson adapted from an article by Mary Jenness in Missionary Education:

It was during the worst days of the China famine. A missionary educational director had been telling a class of girls stories of the starving children—true stories given her by a Chinese missionary on furlough. There was little Da-Sau, who had not eaten for four days, running far out of his village to beg a passing traveler for just one cash. Again and again the girls interrupted the stories to know if they were true, if there were many children like that.

Then the director presented pledge cards which she hoped would net $2.00 for the starving Chinese children.

"But," protested one of the girls, "those stories you have been telling are true! And aren't we going to do something worthwhile about it? Well, then, why didn't you plunge?"

The director stood rebuked. "We will plunge," she promised. For three months that class of girls worked. When the drive was called off, those six girls had sent in over $800 of the thousand they had hoped to get.

That director had learned her lesson. It pays to plunge. It pays to know, it pays to live up to what you know, and more, to live out what you know. In just that combination of knowledge with response, that process of setting love in action, lies the secret of missionary education of young people. Teaching them the world problems, helping them to solve them, here are halves of the whole in training world Christians. The plan is nothing without the plunge!

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Beginning the Lesson

When John Wanamaker, in November, 1914, announced in the Philadelphia papers that he had chartered the steamship Thelma to be sent across the ocean with foodstuffs to the starving Belgians, it was filled in less than a week with freewill offerings. Everyone who gave, gave gladly. As the Thelma was about to leave the pier, Bishop Thomas J. Garland prayed: "Grant that the message which this ship bears from the City of Brotherly Love may be an inspiration to all the nations of the earth, and bring nearer the day when human brotherhood will be no longer a dream." This prayer in 1914 voiced the thought which actuated Paul in the first century in having a collection made by the Gentile churches of Asia Minor and Europe for the benefit of the church in Jerusalem: he aimed to accomplish by his fund just that for which Bishop Garland prayed.

Principles of Stewardship from the Bible

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.—Ps. 24.1.

The tithe is the Lord's.—Lev. 27.30.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.—Mal. 3.10.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase.—Prov. 3.9.

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—Mt. 6.21.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts 20.35.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.—1 Cor. 16.2.

Principles of Christian Stewardship in the Early Church

See Explanations and Comments.

What Does your Religion Cost?

Is your religion costing you enough in money, in hard cash? Well, is that a proper question? It has been put to me like this: A man will pay so much for his house, and not purely out of ostentation, but out of real taste and from a desire to train the taste of his children, he will spend lavishly on that house and will be sure that everything is good there, that there are no poor substitute things to spoil the taste of the children he is bringing up. He will spend a great deal in taking them about the country or out of the country. He will spend a great deal on the school to which he sends them, to which he sends them in faith, on its reputation of fifteen years ago, with no knowledge of the assistant masters with whom the boys will associate. How much will he spend on the church to which he is going to take those boys to insure that they are rightly grounded in the things that are of greatest moment, that go deepest and mean most? Endless money for a French accent and a good car. How far are you prepared to go in securing the best for the children in what is of more moment than any French accent, the best of teaching in the deepest things?—T. R. Glover, in The Christian Advocate.

Consecrated Money

It is a simple thing after all to dedicate the tangible results of our work as we journey along for the benefit of the less fortunate portion of humanity that travels by our side daily.

There is another side to this question which is more or less the divine side. If we have a capacity to earn, to produce and to accumulate, there is a natural law

which operates, and that law is—when we give, we get. The Golden Rule tells us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; in other words, to give if we would get. But the expositors of the Golden Rule fail to state a demonstrated fact, that in order to get we must give, and the more we give the more we get.

Institutions teaching the power of Jesus Christ to save, are crying out all over the land for money. They need it, for they are so constituted that they cannot earn it. God has given to you and to me the power to earn it, perhaps I would better say acquire it, and we do. The trouble with most of us is that we keep more of it than we need.

Let us then consecrate it. There is every reason why we should and none to the contrary. We cannot take it with us. If we leave it for others to spend, our purposes may be defeated. Not to consecrate money may condemn us, and by giving largely we get largely.—From an Address at the Birmingham Convention, by J. L. Kraft.

The Christian Solution of Poverty

An old gentleman of my acquaintance, one who had won wealth honorably and used it nobly, once said that he thought there were three questions which will be put to every man on the Day of Judgment: "How much did you make? How did you make it? How did you use it?"

Make all you can; make it clean; use it well—for the glory of God and the help of your weaker brethren: that is the Christian, the only, the infallible solution of poverty. Were it practised, there would be neither parasites nor paupers.—David Smith, in The British Weekly.

Give not Grudgingly, or of Necessity

Some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. Other persons give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live, and you say, "It is a pleasure to go to such men." There are some men who give as springs do; whether you go to them or not they are always full, and your part is only to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others give just as a pump does when the well is dry and the pump leaks.—Henry Ward Beecher.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Tithing: is it a Christian's duty to tithe?

2. Should we budget our time as well as our money?

3. How charity may be dispensed wisely. "To give money is one thing, to help people by giving it is another."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What new light does this scene throw upon the character of Paul? 2. Why was Paul's spirit filled with foreboding? 3. Was Paul justified in urging the elders to follow his example? 4. How had Paul shown his boldness as a preacher? 5. We hear occasionally that ministers fear to speak boldly against certain evils lest they offend their parishioners: is this true? 6. Is it more blessed to give than to receive? 7. Do we live as if we really believed this? 8. How may one acquire the habit of liberality?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

GIVING THAT HONORS GOD

Beginning the Lesson

During the hot months a "Floating Hospital" makes regular trips from Boston down the harbor with sick babies and their poor mothers, and nurses and doctors go with them to help. One morning Beppo, an eight-year-old Italian lad, who had on ragged clothes and a brimless hat and carried a violin, asked permission to go with the boat and play. "I playa and taka collection," he said, and they allowed him to go.

After he had played awhile he passed around his hat, but no one gave him a penny. He was angry and went to the manager to tell him how stingy the people all were, and the manager explained to him that these were all very poor people who had no money to give, whom kind people were sending on this excursion so that the air might do the poor sick babies good. Beppo looked at his own clothes without saying anything, but thinking that he, too, was poor. Then he went around the

ship and looked at the babies and their mothers, and the angry look left him; he saw that they were really poorer than he, and that the babies and little children were feeble and sick.

He sat down on a camp stool and played, and the children who could walk gathered round him. He played almost all that day, and when they returned he begged to be allowed to come next time, and play to the poor babies. The manager pinned the badge of the Floating Hospital on his ragged coat, and he went with every excursion that summer and played, nor would he take any money from the manager for his playing. He had found out that though he was poor he could do something for people who were poorer than he, and he was as happy as a king while playing to those babies.

There were poor people in the churches which Paul built up on his journeys in many lands, but there were people in the church at Jerusalem who were still poorer. Just as the manager of the Floating Hospital let Beppo see that he could do something for the poor, so Paul showed these churches what they could do for the poor at Jerusalem. The people at Corinth were slow in giving their money, and when he was writing them a letter he told them what the people had done in Macedonia who were themselves very poor.

(Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

First they Gave their Own Selves to the Lord

"What shall I render unto Jehovah
For all his benefits toward me?"

asks the Psalmist, and this is his resolve:

"I will take the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of Jehovah."

The Macedonians, whose example in generous giving Paul impresses upon the Corinthians, had taken "the cup of salvation," they had first given themselves to the Lord, and the sharing of their money with others in need followed as a matter of course. They were Christians, followers of the Christ, and they did as he would have them do. You remember how Christ in his parable of The Judgment said to the righteous, "I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And then in surprise they asked when they had done all this, and Christ answered, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

There is a beautiful little stanza by Christina Rossetti which you probably know:

"What shall I give him
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would give a lamb.
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
But what I can I'll give him—
Give him my heart."

What a Christian Girl Gave

There had been so many tired years, fourteen—almost fifteen. Then one night the great rest came. There was a happy smile on her lips when they found her in the morning. The next afternoon one of her friends came to her mother. "We want to ask a great thing of you," she said. "Instead of having Doctor Groves say anything about her life, some of us want to tell there what she has done for us. We want a great joy service. May we have it?"

"We meant to have the service at home," the mother said. "It seemed more fitting, for nearly half of her life she was just lying here. But if you feel that way—"

"You will be surprised," her friend answered. "Her body lay here, but she—she was walking all over the city—the world—wait until you hear."

The church was crowded. People stood in the doors. Strange-looking people, some of them—men in rough working clothes; a girl with hard eyes and defiant face; and many, many others. The choir sang once, and then the friend who had been her schoolmate rose in her place.

"I want to speak first," she said, "not only because she was my dearest friend,

but because I know a little better than most of you how her ministry began. It was about a year after her accident, when she faced the knowledge that she must be a helpless invalid all her life—she who had so loved the joy of motion. But it wasn't that which she was thinking of—it was the possibility of a life of uselessness. Her battle lasted for months; she came out of it a conqueror. Each day, when the pain was not too severe, she would write a letter to someone who was lonely or tempted, or in sorrow or trouble. She began close at hand; she ended by writing all round the world. The distant ones cannot speak with us today, but those who are here are eager to do it. This is our tribute to the bravest life we ever knew; we need to carry her great love out into the world that needs it so much."

Then they spoke, one after another: a girl whom she had saved from despair; men who had been boys in her Sunday-school class fifteen years before; an iceman whose sick child she had remembered; a postman and a policeman; her own pastor —scores of girls and women. As they spoke, one after another, telling of troubles and temptations that few had known or guessed, but that her love had discovered, it seemed to many of them as if a wonderful light filled the room. With faces shining through tears they stood, at the end, to let her little worn-out body pass.

And it had been just letters; letters, and a heart of love.—The Youth's Companion.

Giving that Honors God

If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. There is such a thing as charity without love. There is a charity which seeks only the praise of men, and there is a charity whose motive is personal relief from the sight of misery. The rich man who of his superfluity cast much into the treasury as Jesus sat and watched is an example of the one; you yourself when you toss a nickel to a blind beggar on the street corner are an example of the other. There is no love in either transaction.

Our word *philanthropist* is derived from two Greek words *philos,* loving, and *anthropos,* man—and means one who loves mankind. "Thy heart must have been full of love for that poor girl," said the poet Whittier to the Superintendent of the Massachusetts Women's Reform School when he learned what she had endured from one of her charges and what she had done for the wayward woman. She was a true philanthropist.

We ought to give generously and cheerfully, but also thoughtfully and wisely. Giving rightly is not an easy task. It has been said that it requires more brains to give away ten thousand dollars without doing more harm than good than it does to make the ten thousand dollars in business. The Editor of The Classmate recalls this statement and instances the wise giving of a small club of business men. Formerly the club had been in the habit of dispensing charity at Christmas by sending out chickens and groceries to a few needy families. Now it selects ten poor boys, eight to ten years old, and invites them for a Christmas dinner at the Club. The boys on arrival are clad in new suits throughout and given a fine dinner. But this is merely the beginning. Each one is told that a guardian, with an assistant, has been appointed for him, and that these two men, members of the club, will befriend him as opportunity offers. These men keep in touch with the boy, stimulate him to his best efforts at school, and when he is ready to go into business, give him a chance to make good.

Class Benevolences

There are calls from the mission field which your class can answer through the Surplus Material Department of the World's Sunday School Association. See page 448.

Sentence Sermons

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done today?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give today?—Nixon Waterman.

Where there is little love for giving, there is little likeness to God.—C. E. Hallam.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Why did not Paul stop at Ephesus himself instead of asking the elders of the church there to come to Miletus to see him? (Acts 20.) 2. "After what manner" had Paul been with the Ephesians? 3. At what sort of labor had his hands supplied his wants? 4. As a pastor what had Paul done for the Ephesians?

PAUL'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20.35

LESSON Acts 20.1—21.17; 2 Corinthians 11.28

DEVOTIONAL READING John 10.7-17

ACTS 20.17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, 19 serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; 20 how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. 33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

2 CORINTHIANS 11.28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL REVIEWS HIS MINISTRY AMONG THE EPHESIANS, Acts 20.17-21. Read The Historical Background. Paul had sailed past Ephesus, for he could not take the time to stop there or elsewhere in the province of Asia, as he was very desirous of being in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. But when he reached Miletus he sent a messenger to the elders (or presbyters, Revised Version) at Ephesus, bidding them come to Miletus to say farewell. See The Geographical Background. In the churches he founded Paul had established the offices of deacons and elders after the model of the Jewish synagogue. Paul speaks sometimes of elders and sometimes of bishops, using the latter term, which means literally overseers, or superintendents, in churches where there was a large Gentile element.

"Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time"—thus Paul began his address to the Ephesian elders upon their arrival. The first day that Paul set foot in Asia is recorded in Acts 16.6, 7, but his first preaching there was later, Acts 18.19. He came to Ephesus again on his last missionary journey, Acts 19. "The manner of his life" he proceeds to tell in the next three verses.

Paul first reminded them how faithfully and how humbly he had served the Lord while his heart was filled with anxiety for them and his own life was threatened by the plots of the Jews (see 1 Cor. 15.32; 2 Cor. 1.8-10); and how he had told them all things profitable for them to know, and had taught them in public and in private the essentials of religion, repentance toward God and faith toward Christ. Fear of giving offence to the Jews and therefore of endangering his own life had not prevented him from preaching a crucified Christ and the gospel for Gentiles as well as for Jews.

"'Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ': there is no other way but by repentance and faith. First, realize your sins; second, confess to Jesus Christ; and third, live as you think you ought to live."

II. PAUL GLANCES AT THE FUTURE, Acts 20.22-27. Next, Paul spoke of his own plans and probable fate. His spirit was heavy. He was constrained by an overpowering sense of duty to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what might happen

to him there; bonds and afflictions had been his portion everywhere and they awaited him in the future. "The Holy Spirit testifieth to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." That strange foreknowledge was his which Longfellow speaks of in Evangeline:

> "As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
> Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
> So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
> Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it."

"If Paul could have looked toward later days, he might have seen with prophetic eyes the figure of John Huss as he journeyed to the great council at Constance in the fifteenth century. He might have seen the figure of Luther as he journeyed to Worms in the sixteenth century. He might have seen himself as one of a great host traveling with noble courage the way of danger in the name of Christ" (Lynn H. Hough).

Paul further told them that he held not his life as dear to himself; his sole purpose was to run his course well, to fulfil the work to which he had been called, the proclaiming of the gospel; they would not see him again; and he called them to witness that he had faithfully warned and taught them, and he was blameless if they failed to follow the truth.

"What a wonderful review it was! We have nothing to show like it. In this case there was no thought of a calm and golden sunset. He saw the clouds rolling up on the sky; knew that to the end, bonds and afflictions awaited him, and that his life would almost certainly end as he had seen Stephen's end, with a martyr's crown. But none of these things moved him, if only he might finish his course. He had been given a specific kind of ministry, and this he was pledged to fulfil.

"For each of us, also, there is a course, a path for our race, clearly marked by the providence of God. Can we say that we are accomplishing or fulfilling it? There is a ministry to others, that we have to perform. Can we say that we have met its sacred duties? There is an example of unselfish giving and help to the weak. Have we furnished it? It is a good thing sometimes to come to Miletus and think backward. Even the very young, if they think backward, will confess that they have not done all they ought, and have done what they ought not" (F. B. Meyer).

III. PAUL TRUSTS THE ELDERS TO GUARD THE CHURCH FROM HERESIES AND ENEMIES AND COMMENDS THEM TO GOD, Acts 20.28-32. Paul then urged his hearers to take heed to themselves and to their charge, to be faithful in their care of the church for which Christ had died; they would have to contend with false teachers from without and from within their own number; therefore, let them be on their guard and remember how he had labored for them. And then he commended them to the care of God who was able to strengthen them and to keep them in the household of faith.

IV. PAUL'S EXAMPLE, Acts 20.33-35. Paul urged them to follow the example he had set in not coveting wealth, but in laboring for his own support and that of others; in all things his life had been an example to them; so laboring they ought to help the weak.

It is a great thing to be able to refer to one's own life as an example for others to follow. It is a great thing to be able to say as did Roosevelt: "I am glad beyond measure that I am one of the many who have stood ready to spend and be spent; pledged to fight while life lasts, the great fight for righteousness, and for brotherhood, and for the welfare of mankind."

Paul's last admonition was in regard to one way in which they could help the weak: they are words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This is the only saying of Christ's which Paul records. It is not given in the Gospels.

An experience of a New York man who is noted for his generosity shows how to acquire the great happiness of giving. "I am by nature extremely avaricious," he said. "But when I was a young man I had sense enough to see how mean and belittling such a position was, and I forced myself to give. At first, I declare to you, it was a torture to part with a penny; but I

persisted, until the habit of liberality was formed. There is no yoke like that of habit. Now I like to give."

V. THE PARTING ON THE SHORE, Acts 20.36-38. As Paul concluded his speech they all knelt down while he prayed with them, and then in deep sorrow at the thought that they should have their beloved leader with them no more, the elders embraced and kissed him, and escorted him to the ship. What a warm-hearted, lovable man Paul must have been, to have his departure affect these men so deeply!

VI. PAUL'S ANXIETY FOR THE CHURCHES, 2 Corinthians 11.28. Besides the things which are outside of his daily cares, Paul writes that he was constantly burdened by his anxiety in regard to all the churches. A perusal of his Epistles reveals how many reasons he had for being anxious about their welfare and spiritual life.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

With tears, 20.19. This shows the intensity of Paul's anxiety for the Ephesians. Tears under any strong emotion were common among oriental people.

I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, 20.20. Such openness was quite contrary to the religious ideas of the Ephesians. Mysteries, open only to the initiated, abounded at that period; and, as elsewhere, secrecy was an important element in Ephesian superstition. Such ideas of a knowledge known only to the enlightened few, who are the "elect," the "spiritual," the "knowing ones," were soon to invade the church. In his Epistle to the Colossians Paul had to combat its incipient traces.—R. B. Rackham.

So that I may accomplish my course, 20.24. Without doubt, Paul, as a Hellenist, had seen in his youth the Greek games. In fact, there has been found at Tarsus a Greek inscription which was set up as a monument at the termination of the walls surrounding the race-course; by which is proved, what is not elsewhere found in written sources, that the native city of Paul possessed a race-course.—Lechler, in Apostelgeschichte.

I coveted no man's apparel, 20.33. It is said that the Ephesians were especially noted for their luxurious apparel; among orientals it was accounted an important part of their wealth.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What is meant by the term *Asia?* When and where did Paul first set foot in Asia? When had he labored at Ephesus? What have we learned about Paul's experiences with the Ephesians?

On the Way to Jerusalem for the Last Time

From Macedonia (where our letter which we studied last week was written), Paul went on to Greece and stayed three months at Corinth. During this time he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. Then Paul started for Jerusalem.

More than a year's time had been occupied in gathering the collection from the various Gentile churches for the poor in the church at Jerusalem. Each group of churches sent their money by delegates who met Paul at different points on his route and accompanied him to Jerusalem.

Paul first intended sailing from Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth, directly to Syria, but on learning that the hostile Jews knew of this plan and were plotting to take his life on shipboard, he changed his route and went through Macedonia. This longer route made it impossible for him to reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, as he had hoped to do, and therefore he aimed to reach there at Pentecost, fifty days later.

He stopped at Philippi, then sailed from Neapolis, its port, for Troas, where the other delegates to Jerusalem were awaiting him, and there he spent a week.

Paul's companions took ship from Troas, sailing around the promontory to Assos, where Paul joined them, having covered the short distance by land. The ship touched at Mitylene and Samos. In a few days Miletus was reached, and there the elders came from Ephesus to see Paul.

Miletus was at this time a seaport of Caria, the most important and most famous

of the Ionian colonies. Its site is now ten miles inland. From Ephesus to Miletus was a distance of thirty miles by sea, and twenty by the direct land route.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

There are several suggestive thoughts for teachers to ponder in Paul's references to his work among the Ephesians. The twentieth verse of our lesson has two very practical hints.

Gateway in Outer Wall of Assos through Which Is Seen the Citadel
It was under this gateway that Paul passed.

Paul's rule in teaching was to declare anything that was profitable; profitable, that is, to his hearers, rather than to Paul himself. Either because of our own interest in certain questions, or because we do not know the interests and problems of our pupils, we teachers sometimes dwell upon themes interesting enough in themselves but of no profit to our class. In some classes social or economic problems, or "higher" or "lower" critical questions or abstruse reasoning, interest the teachers greatly, but are as remote from the minds of their pupils as would be some, to them, unknown language.

The way to avoid "unprofitable teaching" is to study the lives and problems of our pupils and try to meet them. The social hours spent with classes of young people and adults have an essential bearing upon profitable class leadership. Paul knew this. He taught not only publicly, but from house to house. A good teacher of Intermediates and Seniors visits his pupils in their homes, becomes acquainted with their parents, and learns to understand the environment and difficulties of each pupil.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL, SHEPHERD OF THE CHURCHES

Beginning the Lesson

For Paul the beginning of the end has come. The shadows are gathering about him. He knows this, and very touching are his farewell words to the elders of the church of Ephesus which we study today. They are full of tenderness and exhortation.

It is always hard to say good-by to those with whom one has lived and worked and whom one has learned to love. If we were old Romans, Dr. Babcock tells us, who thought "Vale!" meant "forever," we might well hesitate to speak the word, but "good-by" for Christians, even if it should be for the last time on earth, is only the difference between "good-night" and "good-morning," and if it comes hesitatingly, one should stretch it out into the loveliest of wishes, "God be with you." This was Paul's way; he commended his friends and co-workers to God.

(Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

An Ideal Ministry

Paul's retrospect gives us a beautiful picture of what an ideal ministry is like. It was an earnest ministry. It was no pastime for him; it was a serious and solemn business. He agonized even to tears for the souls of men.

It was a faithful ministry. He declared the whole counsel of God. He kept back nothing that was profitable. And therefore he could proudly declare that he was

pure from the blood of all men. The man who slurs over the solemn warnings of the gospel is not dealing fairly with men's souls.

Paul was not only the preacher, he was also the pastor. He not only taught the crowds in public, but he taught them from house to house. This individual dualing is the most difficult, but at the same time the most rewarding part of a minister's duty.

It was a blameless ministry. To avoid even the suspicion of making the gospel a way of gain, Paul throughout his sojourn in Ephesus supported himself by his own labor.

It was an evangelical ministry. The theme of it was "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Condensed from a Sermon by J. D. Jones.

Paul Served the Lord with All Lowliness of Mind

Nothing is more necessary to service which is at once approved of God, and of acceptance before man, than humility. The servant of Christ who lacks this grace is a contradiction of the gospel which he mediates. No amount of zeal, or forcefulness, or ability, can make up for its absence. The one who proclaims the truth must himself incarnate its character and power. How essentially does this becoming humility distinguish the life and service of Paul! Bold to rebuke evil, as he must needs be; outstanding amongst all men in the fulfilment of his commission, immovable in his certainty as to the truth of his message—there was yet in his life and bearing an all-pervasive spirit of humility which disarmed opposition and countered prejudice, and so made opening for his work. In this same spirit we must follow him as he followed Christ.

Humility of mind cannot be simulated. Nothing, indeed, is more noxious than the spurious counterfeit to this grace which some men have attempted. Nor does it ever pass muster with the world, for it is fatally easy of detection. True humility is a compact of knowledge, and penitence, and reverence. The man who knows the holiness of God and his own sinfulness, whose heart is bowed beneath its own shame and uplifted by the might of his grace, and whose spirit is contrite in the presence of the redeeming love which has rescued and saved him, cannot be other than humble, yet confident, before men. Little in his own eyes, the Lord ever makes such an one great, by honoring and confirming his witness.—J. Stuart Holden, in The Christian.

Two Other Great Pastors

We think of Phillips Brooks as a great preacher, but those fortunate enough to be in his church knew him also as a great pastor. He said one time: "I wish that I could devote every hour of the day to calling on my people. I know of no happier or more helpful work that a pastor can do, and I call as much as I can. How is it possible for one to preach to his people if he does not know them, their doubts, sorrows and ambitions?"

Dr. J. H. Jowett, like Paul, possessed rare powers of sympathy, for which he paid a high price, literally wearing himself out in his ministry. He once said: "At first I could not conduct a funeral without tears. I could not read the Burial Service without my speech being choked; but now I have had so many funerals, I have seen so many people in sorrow, I have seen so much suffering, that I can read the Burial Service without tears. Well, perhaps this is part of the gracious providence of God that the burden should be eased, but I don't want the ease if it be at the cost of losing the compassion with my fellow-men. I would rather have the tears, I would prefer the choking speech, I would prefer that my not-too-strong body should be tired out, drained out twice or thrice a week, if I might only keep my compassion with my fellow-men."

Dr. Grenfell, Shepherd of Souls

The spirt that animated Paul has been the same in countless other followers of Christ. Deeds of self-denial that would be difficult to do from purely human motives, become a willing service under the impelling force of a divinely given command. Dr. Grenfell is a successor of Paul who does his noble work because he is bound in the spirit. "Fear of the sea is quite incomprehensible to Dr. Grenfell," Mr. Norman Duncan tells us in Dr. Grenfell's Parish. "It is chiefly because of his simple and splendid faith that he is an instrument in God's hands—God's to do with as he will, as he would say. His faith is exceptional, I am sure—child-like, steady, over-mastering, and withal, healthy. It takes something such as the faith he has to move a man to run a steamer at full speed in the fog when there is ice on every hand. It is hardly credible, but quite true! neither wind, nor ice, nor fog, nor all combined, can

keep his boat in harbor when there comes a call for help from beyond. The doctor clambers cheerfully out on the bowspirit and keeps both eyes open. 'As the Lord wills,' says he, 'whether for wreck or service. I am about his business.'"

The House to House Ministry

Paul was not content with a public proclamation of the gospel. He taught privately from house to house. The intimate, personal relation of the teaching following the forceful, public presentation of the preacher, made the seizure of the truth upon the individual life a powerful thing.

The "house to house" presentation of the gospel is a matter in which every church member can have a share. In fact, whether we plan it or not, we are all teachers in the intimate contacts of our daily life. Out from us there goes an incentive toward God or a subtle poison of selfishness and indulgence. From house to house we are carrying all unconsciously a message which for good or evil changes the lives of men. —Lynn H. Hough.

Paul Practised What he Preached

Paul could truthfully say, "I have given you an example in all things." He did not talk about great sums to be collected for the poor, about sacrificial giving and sacrificial living, without first setting them an example in all things.

It is said that a poorly-clad woman once met Eugene Sue on the streets of Paris and begged him to help her. The great author brushed her aside and continued his walk. She followed and again stopped him. He was forced to listen a moment to her piteous appeal, but he told her coldly that her troubles did not concern him. Again she persisted and he ordered her to leave, saying angrily that he should hand her over to the police if she did not obey. "Is this really Eugene Sue, the celebrated advocate of the poor and oppressed, the man who so eloquently describes and laments in his books the hard lot of the unfortunate?" questioned the woman in another tone, dropping her suppliant manner. "Who are you?" exclaimed the astonished man. Her answer revealed that she was one of the most fashionable ladies of Paris, one to whom he had recently prated about his benevolence.

You Have Been Put into "the Ministry"

Whatever your work for Christ, whatever the sphere in which you have to sustain the Christian character, whether your duty is to be done in school, mission, home, workshop, or sanctuary, whether you glorify his name in some prominent and public capacity or simply bear witness for him in obscure ways and private places, you have been put into what Paul calls "the ministry." It is the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus. Do you regard it as Paul did?—J. G. Greenhough, in The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The human Paul. See Chapter VIII of Paul of Tarsus, by T. R. Glover.

2. Paul's sense of duty. See Chapter entitled The Sense of Duty, in Seeking the Mind of Christ, by Robert E. Speer.

3. The care of all the churches. See Chapter XII of J. Paterson Smyth's Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Was Nero the sort of civil authority whom one could gladly obey? 2. How could Paul counsel obedience to such a "higher power"? 3. What principle given by Jesus practically covers verses 1-7? 4. Is it right to break laws which we think are unjust? 5. Which is preferable: for Uncle Sam to pay the cost of prohibition in adequate salaries for prohibition officers and in the enlargement of the court system, or to pay the cost of lax enforcement by additions to the criminal classes and the breakdown of our social system?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

WHAT OUR PASTOR DOES FOR US

Beginning the Lesson

In a book entitled Paul the Ambassador, Grace Winter tells the story of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem in the form of extracts purporting to be from the diary of Luke the physician, the writer of The Acts. Here is Luke's account of the journey from Philippi to Miletus.

The Month of March, A. D. 58, at Philippi.—Our beloved brother Paul arrived here this day from Corinth. He is on his way to Jerusalem with seven delegates, who carry with them moneys collected for the poor saints of Jerusalem. The party intended to sail direct to Tyre, but the discovery of a wicked plot to murder the apostle during the voyage altered their plans. Fearing lest the enemy Jews should have bribed all the shipmasters in port at Corinth, they risked no other Syrian vessel. We fear to lose our leader. It would be an irreparable loss to the newly formed Christian churches.

Monday, March 27.—The other delegates have this day gone over to Troas, there to await us. He and I will spend the Passover in Philippi. We set sail tomorrow for Troas.

April 6.—Becalmed! We should have been in port tonight. Since leaving Philippi Paul has been heavy and dispirited. I find that he is anxious concerning his reception at Jerusalem. The Jews are not best pleased at the overflowing numbers of the Gentile converts. They appear to be jealous and disturbed lest the Christian church should become more Gentile than Jewish. Paul is hoping that the generous gift which we carry with us will lead them to think more highly of their Gentile brethren, but he is not sure how it will be received. While yet at Corinth writing his circular letter, he besought all to pray for him that he might be kept in safety, and that the gifts from the Gentile Christians might be graciously and gratefully accepted. May it be so! Paul is now nearing sixty years of age. He is worn with toil, and I could wish that he had a more peaceful time before him.

April 9.—The Granite City (Troas) at last, and a warm welcome from our brethren. We shall be detained here for a week, there being no boat earlier.

April 17.—The apostle is not sailing with us today. He wished to be alone, and is walking through the oak woods across the Point which our boat is now rounding, to Assos.

Tuesday.—At Mitylene. We had not to wait for Paul. He still thinks little of a long walk, and appeared refreshed rather than wearied by it. We shall get on but slowly now with our voyage, as there is no moon, and we must anchor each night.

Wednesday Night.—We are at present anchored off the rocky island of Chios, which is thought to be the birthplace of the poet Homer.

Thursday.—Called at Samos today. Are now anchored in the island harbor of Trogyllium.

Friday.—Sailing past Ephesus, we came to anchor at Miletus at noon. Paul has sent a swift messenger to the elders of the Ephesian church, bidding them come hither to say farewell to him. He desires greatly to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost, and for that reason, would not take a boat that called at Ephesus, fearing the delay.

Sunday.—The elders arrived in time, having done the thirty miles with all speed. Before their return to Ephesus, brother Paul held service with them on the seashore. The apostle was in a sad mood, and his sadness infected us all. He told the company of the repeated warnings which he had received in his soul, of trouble to be faced at Jerusalem, and stated frankly that he never expected to see his friends of Ephesus again. Another cause of grief to him is that he so often fears that when he is gone his converts will forget those things which he has taught them with so much labor. He cannot bear the thought that his work would be in vain. Tonight he gave them three warnings: "Take heed!" he said to them. "Watch!" "Remember!"

They must take heed lest Satan tempt them to sin; and they must care for the members of their churches as shepherds care for their sheep. They must watch also against false teaching. They must remember how anxious Paul is about them; they must recall to their minds the words he has spoken to them, and they must especially remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Those words are indeed true, for selfish folk are never happy folk.

When the apostle had said all that was in his heart, we knelt upon the shore, amongst the rocks, while he commended the elders to God the Ever-Blessed, praying fervently that all present might receive the heavenly inheritance.

As we rose from our knees, the elders embraced Paul as if he had been their father. (And so he is indeed—in the Faith.) Weeping, they accompanied us to the ship, which sailed at dawn, waving their farewells from the shore.

Lincoln's Farewell Address to his Neighbors at Springfield

Compare Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders with this address delivered by Lincoln as he was about to start for Washington to assume the presidency of the United States:

"My friends, no one not in my position can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of these people I owe everything. I now leave, not knowing when or whether I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in him, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To his care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

What Our Pastor Does for Us

In our lesson text we see Paul as a pastor recalling to the leaders of the church at Ephesus his pastorate among them, telling them how he served the Lord in all humility, how he sought to teach them what was profitable for them, how he not only preached in the public meeting-place but visited them in their homes, how he urged them to repent of their sins and to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. These deeds of Paul are the deeds of pastors everywhere.

In every town and city of our land there formerly stood at least one church with a steeple. Many churches now are of such a type of architecture as to require a tower instead of a steeple. The old saying was that the steeple was "a finger pointing to heaven." There is a great truth back of this figurative expression. The church with its steeple stands in the midst of the business and social life of the town, silently directing our thoughts to the reality behind the material things of life—the reality of the spiritual life of prayer, of worship, of God, of the possibility of "seeing him who is invisible," as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses our thought.

Whether your church is of stone or brick or wood, whether it has tower or steeple, it has an upward pointing force in its pastor. He stands for the reality of God and religion. He urges us to repent of our sins and to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. He helps us to worship.

In the church services our pastor by his sermons opens our minds to new ideas of righteousness and opportunities of service; in the hymns he leads our thanksgiving; in the prayers he expresses our gratitude and desires.

Further, like Paul, our pastor's life is an example for us. We all know the story of the mother who said to the child: "Don't do as I do. Do as I say." And Emerson was expressing the same idea when he said: "What you do thunders so loud that I can't hear what you say." It is a wonderful thing to have one's life express one's words. And is this not what our pastor's life does? He goes about doing good, visiting the sick, looking after the needy, listening to and advising the troubled, and comforting the mourning.

It is More Blessed to Give than to Receive

You ought to give to missions all that you can, and to say every time you make an offering: "It is more blessed to be a Christian child and to give to the cause of missions that the gospel may be preached everywhere than it is to be a heathen child and have to receive the gospel from others who seem to be so slow in giving it."

Every time you give an offering for the orphans you ought to think: "It is more blessed to live in a happy home with father and mother and to give help to those who have no father and mother, than it is to be a poor orphan and to receive what other people feel like giving."—Thomas W. Dickert, in Sermons for Juniors.

Sentence Sermons

A good man does good merely by living.—Bulwer.

As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindles nobleness.—Lowell.

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear.
Fine counsel is confusing, but examples always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.—Edgar A. Guest.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What reason does Peter give in 1 Pet. 2.13 for obedience to civil authority? 2. Who does Paul say should fear those in authority? 3. How can Paul say that he that loveth his brother hath fulfilled the law? 4. Why was our prohibition law enacted? 5. What harm does intoxicating drink do? 6. Why should our prohibition law be obeyed?

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

GOLDEN TEXT: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law. Romans 13.10

LESSON Romans 13.1-14

ROMANS 13.1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the *powers* that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due;* custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof.*

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 15

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITY A CHRISTIAN DUTY, verses 1-7. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" was the burning question which the Pharisees brought to Jesus, and you recall how he answered, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." A great part of the Jews were always questioning the lawfulness of paying taxes and of recognizing the authority of the Roman Government. The Jews of Rome had been especially turbulent, and of this Paul must have heard many accounts from Priscilla and Aquila, who had been forced to leave Rome on account of the trouble. Recall Lesson 11, of the Third Quarter. In writing to the Romans, therefore, Paul was naturally led to take up the question of the Christian's relation to the civil authority.

"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers—those in authority, the civil rulers, he counseled, and then by means of two clauses, one negative and the other positive, he asserted that the fact of the authority being established argues that it was ordained of God.

"The Roman Empire maintained law and order, protected life and property, and was on the whole, as Paul believed, a beneficent power. Nero, the reigning emperor, was, it is true, a dissolute young man who often arbitrarily did as he pleased with the lives of his subjects, but at the time Paul was writing, persecution of the Christians had come from other Jews or from popular riots, and not from the Roman Government. At Paphos (Acts 13), Thessalonica (Acts 17), Corinth (Acts 18) and at Ephesus (Acts 19) Paul had found the Roman officials a restraining power to his persecutors. Noteworthy is it that after Paul had appealed to Rome and had been kept in confinement for some time without trial, he wrote to Timothy, 1. Tim. 2.1, 2: "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity."

"If our laws are not Christian, then it is our business to make them Christian; if those in authority do not represent Christian ideals, we are not to deny authority, but to secure legislators and governors whose ideals are Christian. We are more fortunate than those to whom the apostle wrote; we have some say about the laws which are to be enacted and the officials who execute them" (Gaius Glenn Atkins).

"Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand, shall receive to themselves judgment." It was to this passage

that the royalist divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appealed in vindication of their doctrines of the divine rights of kings and the duty of passive obedience; but they overlooked the essential consideration that, as Chrysostom remarks, the apostle inculcates here submission not to governors but to government. The question of the legitimacy of resistance to tyranny does not here arise. The apostle has in view a righteous and beneficent government. He recognizes what disasters would ensue from its dethronement. 'Everything,' says Chrysostom, 'would go to wrack; neither city nor farm, neither house nor market, nor aught else would stand, but everything would be overturned' " (David Smith).

Rulers are divinely ordained for the punishment of wrong-doers and the rewarding of well-doers. Only those who do evil need fear them. To be free from fear of the powers that be, do good.

"The inference is, of course, that when rulers are a terror to good works, when their laws violate divine laws, then it is the Christian's duty to disobey them. Recall Blackstone's statement that 'Any law that contravenes the Word of God is no law at all.' "

The time came when the Christians were subject to a power which required them to do that which was forbidden by their religion. "To that extent and within these limits they could not and did not obey it; but they never encouraged in any way resistance or rebellion."

To the evil-doer, rulers are the agents of God, appointed for his punishment. Therefore render obedience, not only from fear, but because obedience is right. For the ruler beareth not the sword in vain: "'this refers not to the dagger worn by the emperor as emblem of his power, but to the sword by which criminals were executed, which was on certain occasions borne before the magistrate as a symbol of his authority to inflict punishment" (A. E. Garvie).

You *must* be in subjection, Paul continues, not only because of "the wrath" which the magistrators executes upon the disobedient, but because of your own conscience, which recognizes the right of the authority and the need of freely submitting to it.

For conscience' sake you pay tribute as well as obedience, for rulers are ministers of God's service, persevering faithfully in their official duties. The right of civil authorities to obedience involves also their right to collect taxes, for they must be supported by the contributions of their subjects. The laborer is worthy of his hire, declared Jesus.

Paul now gives the general principle that all obligations to civil authorities should be met: tribute (taxes paid by subject people) to whom tribute is due; custom (ordinary taxes for the support of the government) to whom custom is due; fear (perfect obedience) to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due.

"There are some who think they are honest and upright, who would escape, if possible, the payment of their share of the expense of the city or of the state, in the payment for sidewalks, streets, or the protection of the police. They would not pay what is their due" (Russell Conwell).

II. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH MUST CONTROL ONE'S RELATION TO ALL: LOVE FULFILS THE LAW, verses 8-10. "Owe no man anything," Paul counsels, and then makes one exception to this rule, "save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law." The Greek word translated "neighbor" is given in the margin of the Bible as "the other." Love is a debt that we owe to humanity.

"Many an impulse of Christian love finds its personal application much more difficult than its emotional expression. Philanthropists bid us love the poor, but a specific poor person is often unpicturesque and sometimes repelling. Reformers would have us love the human race, but this general principle becomes much obscured when individuals of a race black, brown, or yellow are brought into objectionable proximity. Christian love becomes, under such conditions, no easy surrender to general good natures, but a specific victory of the will. It stands before the complex mystery of another personality, and sees reflected in that neighbor a similar mingling of the desirable and repelling which it discovers in itself, and, by applying reflection to affection, is taught tolerance, justice, patience, and hope" (Francis G. Peabody).

Love works no ill to others. He who is ruled by love for his neighbor will not

defraud him in the matters of purity, of life, of property. In giving the commandments which refer to one's duties to one's neighbors, Paul places the seventh before the sixth, as in Mark 10.19; Luke 18.20.

"Whoever will honestly seek to apply that negative precept of working no ill to others, will find it positive enough. We harm men when we fail to help them. If we can do them a kindness and do it not, we do them ill. Non-activity for good is activity for evil" (Alexander Maclaren).

"If there be any other commandment in regard to one's neighbors," Paul adds, "it is summed up in this word, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," the law given in Lev. 19.18. Love (personified here as in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians) breaks none of the commandments mentioned, works no ill to his neighbor, is therefore the fulfilment of the law, for it leads to that conduct for which the law calls.

III. THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN, verses 13, 14. "Let us walk becomingly, as in the day," Paul urges (Paul speaks of conduct as a walk some thirty-three times in his letters), and then he enumerates some of the evils which a Christian will not commit. Dr. James Stifler bids us notice that strife and jealousy are classed with the coarse indulgences of the animal nature and make a climax: the contentious, envious man ranks with the drunkard and the debauchee.

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." To "put on a person," "to be clothed with a person," is a Greek phrase signifying to assume the interests of another, to enter into his views, to imitate him and to be wholly on his side. "Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine, speaks of the sons putting on their father. The figure of speech is taken from the custom of stage-players; they assumed the name and garments of the person whose character they were to act, and endeavored as closely as possible to imitate him in their spirit, words and actions" (Adam Clarke).

"How constantly we are rushing into life with all its demands, half-dressed! When we are proud, we have left out Christ's humility; when we are morally weak we have forgotten to put on Christ as our strength; when we fail in some temptation, we have failed to put on Christ as the complement to all demands; when there is lack in us of the sweetness, reasonableness, and loveliness of Jesus, it is because we have forgotten to put on his 'meek and quiet spirit.' Let us 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ,' and every part of his vesture" (F. B. Meyer.)

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers, verse 1. There was good reason for this duty of subjection to civil magistrates. 1. Because of the reproach which the Christian religion lay under in the world, as an enemy of public peace, order and government, as a sect that turned the world upside down, and the embracers of it as enemies of Cæsar, their enemies having found such representations needful for the justifying of their barbarous rage against them. Paul, therefore, for the clearing of Christianity from this reproach, shows that obedience to civil magistrates is one of the laws of Christ, whose religion helps to make people good subjects. 2. Because of the temptation which the Christians lay under to be otherwise affected by civil magistrates, some of them being Jews, and so leavened with a principle that it was unmeet for any of the seed of Abraham to be subject to one of another nation.—Matthew Henry.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

In an earlier lesson we studied Paul's words about what love is: what were they? To whom were those words written? What answer did Christ make to the question whether it was right to pay tribute to Cæsar?

The Epistle to the Romans

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth, toward the close of his Third Missionary Journey, shortly before he started on what proved to be his last journey to Jerusalem. For an account of the letter see our Introduction.

Paul's Purpose in Counseling Loyalty to Government

The Christians in Rome, though mainly Gentile as this Epistle shows, were closely connected with the Jews, and the Jews were notoriously bad subjects. Many of them held, on the ground of Dt. 17.15, that to acknowledge a Gentile ruler was itself sinful; and the spirit which prompted Pharisees to ask, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?" (Mk. 12.14), had no doubt its representatives in Rome also. As believers in the Messiah, "in another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17.7), even Christians of Gentile origin may have been open to the impulses of this same spirit; and unbalanced minds, then as in all ages, might be disposed to find in the loyalty which was due to Christ alone, an emancipation from all subjection to inferior powers. There is here an apparent point of contact between Christianity and anarchism, and it may have been the knowledge of some such movement of mind in the church at Rome that made Paul write as he did. There is perhaps nothing in the passage which is not already given in our Lord's word, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's," yet nothing can be more worthy of admiration than the soberness with which a Christian idealist like Paul lays down the divine right of the state.—The Expositor's Greek Testament.

Paul at Corinth Dictating His Letter to the Romans

The City of Rome

See Lesson X of this Quarter.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The great mistake of those who worked so valiantly to make ours a sober nation was to assume that the battle was wholly won when the Eighteenth Amendment was enacted, and to cease their efforts to instruct the youth of the land in the harmful effects of indulgence in intoxicating liquors. Well-organized courses of instruction in schools and Church-schools were allowed to lapse. Each generation should be instructed in the nature of alcohol, and given a realization of the inefficiency, poverty, crime and vice which result from its use as a drink.

No amount of legislation can do away with the need for training the youth in habits of temperate living and of loyal obedience to laws. Law depends for its support upon the conscience of those living under the law. Church-school teachers have a great opportunity and responsibility here.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
STANDING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Beginning the Lesson

Never has the whole subject of prohibition been before us as now. Have we all made up our minds as to what we think about our Eighteenth Amendment and its enforcement, and the effect its non-enforcement has upon the keeping of all law?

As the basis for our World's Temperance Sunday lesson we have Paul's words to the Romans about obedience to law and law-makers; they are timely and profitable for us. What does Paul mean by his statements in the first verse of Romans 13? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Then and Now

When I was a boy once or twice a year mother would say the cistern must be cleaned out. "Why?" I protested, "the water is all right." But she had her way and I was master of ceremonies. Pailful after pailful I hauled and dumped, and, while the water seemed clear as I began and smelled not very much, as I stirred it I was convinced mother was right. Dirt-débris, smells of the vilest, were there.

People who today are aghast, dismayed by the crop of evils that apparently came out of the closing of the saloons, must remind themselves that they are observing the accumulations of years of lawlessness; these dregs of bootleggers and the whole unsavory crew were always in the liquor business, but were only noticed particularly when that cistern of villainy was stirred up.

Before the Eighteenth Amendment the products of the saloons overflowed onto our Chicago streets. For a good mile west from the loop on Madison Street one could not walk day or night without being bumped by the boozy. By the hundreds the poor victims used to line the curb or weave patterns on the sidewalks. A similarly disgusting sight could be observed on several other streets. Street fights were common. The "morning after," some men were picked out of alleys near dead from exposure, and frequent murders occurred.

The police stations used to be well filled with "drunks" over Sunday, and a good share of cases before our municipal judges on Monday were these same pitiful creatures.

In those days we didn't speak of all the drunks we saw. We didn't have time, for they were too numerous, but today it is a matter of comment to see such a person. They are easily counted.

In the old days the saloon flaunted itself brazenly, reached out its lure for our youth. Bright lights gleamed, music invited, shades gave seclusion, roistering crowds filled our 7,200 places of hell. Women, girls, boys, "drunks," *contrary to law,* were found nightly in these places of maudlin gaiety, and the saloon keeper, *contrary to law,* sold them liquor.

According to the Chicago Tribune, the World's Wettest Newspaper, of June 1, 1914, "a three-months' survey showed that 14,000 women and girls frequented every twenty-four hours the back rooms of saloons in the following streets—Madison, North Clark, and Cottage Grove Avenue."

But today the uninitiated must search for a dispenser of drink and is himself frequently suspected of being an under-cover man for the drys. There are places operating outside the law, camouflaged, not easy for the average citizen to see, just as a rattlesnake dustily merges with the background of the desert. But like the rattlesnakes they are growing fewer with advance of time.—Condensed from an Article in the Congregationalist, by Walter Howard Moore.

Lady Astor's Stand on Prohibition

Lady Astor, who is a member of the British House of Commons, made a visit recently to her native country and in a lecture in New York told of her impressions as to changes in America. She was loudly applauded when she had this to say about prohibition here:

"It impresses and depresses me that the people who are saying that prohibition is a failure are the ones who have failed to try it; and the people who deplore the lawlessness of rum-runners are the ones who are breaking the law themselves. Rum-runners would starve if citizens obeyed the law.

"I don't care about the effects of prohibition on the idle rich—nobody has the right to be idle—rich or poor.

"I can't tell you about prohibition, but I can tell you what I think of drink. It has caused more misery than any one thing in the world. It has caused political, moral and social corruption, and never has it helped man in his struggle from the material to the spiritual. And that, after all, is what counts in life. In fact, it is the only purpose in life—just a struggle from the material to the spiritual, and drink has always hindered man in that upward struggle.

"You hear on all sides that women will not go back on prohibition. Surely they are showing political stability and vision on that subject. They are thinking of the world ahead—one which has been rid of rum-runners and bootleggers, in which

children can grow up with a reasonable chance of not knowing the evils of drink. The women are thinking."

Prohibition Can be Enforced

Professor Irving Fisher, professor of Economics at Yale University, made an exhaustive study of the effect of prohibition and the situation as to its enforcement. He thinks it might have been better had the Eighteenth Amendment not been enacted until some of the eastern states had been better educated up to it, and he gives much that can be said against the law. He calls the situation in 1926 "Prohibition at Its Worst," and then decides that it still is an inestimable boon to our land from practically every point of view. The two great factors that prevent a more satisfactory enforcement he finds in the persistent effort of the moderates to exaggerate and magnify the failure of the law, and the open campaign of the liquor interests in favor of lawlessness. That campaign must be met and mastered, no matter what it costs. He does not believe that it will ever be possible to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment. He cannot conceive of any other law being acceptable to as many people as it is, or being nearly as effective as it is. He believes a reasonable enforcement is quite a practical possibility.

"To be mentally honest, we must frankly face all the facts," he writes. "Some of these are not pleasant for Prohibitionists to face; others are not pleasant for their opponents. There seem to me to be nine great facts, or groups of facts, to face:

(1) The present situation of imperfect enforcement is intolerable.
(2) Conditions are not, however, as bad as commonly represented.
(3) Prohibition has accomplished much good, hygienically, economically, and socially.
(4) The 'personal liberty' argument is largely illusory.
(5) We cannot accomplish what the opponents of Prohibition really want by amending the Volstead Act, without thereby violating the Eighteenth Amendment.
(6) To repeal the Eighteenth Amendment is out of the question.
(7) To nullify it would mean disrespect for law of the most demoralizing kind.
(8) Therefore the only practicable solution is to enforce the law.
(9) Enforcement is a practical possibility."

A Scathing Rebuke of Law Violators

Here is the opinion of the Judicial Section of the American Bar Association.

"Reverence for law and enforcement of law depend mainly upon the ideals and customs of those who occupy the vantage ground of life in business and society.

"The people of the United States, by solemn constitutional and statutory enactment, have undertaken to suppress the age-long evil of the liquor traffic.

"When, for the gratification of their appetites or the promotion of their interests, lawyers, bankers, great merchants and manufacturers, and social leaders, both men and women, disobey and scoff at this law, or any other law, they are aiding the cause of anarchy and promoting mob violence, robbery, and homicide; they are sowing dragon's teeth, and they need not be surprised when they find that no judicial or police authority can save our country or humanity from reaping the harvest."

Dry Sentiment Is Gaining around the World

It was a startling announcement which Punch, most famous weekly of its kind in the world, made recently that it would accept no more liquor advertisements—startling because we have grown accustomed to think that the liquor forces in Great Britain are so powerful that no such "knock-out blow" would be given them. The Christian Century, in commenting upon this action, says:

"Just what the source of its name is we do not know. It probably had some reference to Punch and Judy. But there may be a reference to that potable concoction out of a free imbibing of which good fellowship and high conviviality are supposed to flow. Or there may not. At any rate, the pages of Punch have given, from week to week, wide publicity to the virtues of the various ales, whiskeys, and other liquors which compete for the patronage of Britain's comfortable classes. But now, say the publishers, no more! All the arguments as to the status of temperance sentiment in Great Britain backed by the statistics which all the arguers can gather, do not compare in significance with this single announcement. If Punch is ready to throw out liquor advertising, then there is growing up a sentiment against 'the trade' in England which must be reckoned with. And Punch comes so near to being an international institution that its decision can, in some measure, be accepted as

evidence of the strength of the world-wide movement against alcohol. The exclusion of liquor advertising from this paper is a great victory for the 'dry' cause."

Canada's Experience with the Bootlegger

The pretext on which the sale of intoxicating liquors is to be legalized is that "the bootlegger is to be got rid of." How this is to be done is not made clear. It is twice as difficult to do away with him under Government sale as it is under prohibitory law. He can buy legally and sell more cheaply than the Government. He is enjoying an inhanced status inasmuch as he and the Government of his province have got together on the question of buying and selling liquor. Each is operating under its own law.—Murdoch MacKinnon.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. If the officers in charge of prohibition enforcement have not been selected because they are devoted to the work, who should be held responsible?

2. Is the injunction a safe weapon for the police and the courts to apply?

3. Do "the wets" want a return of the old-time saloon? If light wines and beer were sold in "respectable places," would that do away with the bootleggers of hard liquor?

4. Can prohibition be enforced? See Chapter XVI of Prohibition at its Worst, by Irving Fisher.

5. What responsibility have the members of our class in regard to law enforcement?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What is Isaiah's great verse about peace? (Is. 9.11.) 2. What are Micah's great words about peace? (Micah 4.1-8.) 3. Explain Paul's words about consecration. 4. What is Christian love? 5. How would Paul bring about peace and good will among men? 6. How can we educate for peace? 7. What progress has been made toward the outlawry of war? 8. Is our nation doing all that it can toward the accomplishment of this aim? 9. Before next Sunday read articles 8-17 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

REASONS FOR PROHIBITION

Beginning the Lesson

What does our Golden Text say? Who said it? To whom? What does Paul say about the debt of love, verse 8? If we truly care about the welfare of others, we do them no ill; when it is in our power, we prevent harm coming to them. This was one great reason for the enactment of our Prohibition Law. When there were saloons on so many convenient corners countless numbers of workmen spent the money there which should have gone to the support of their families, and there they ruined their own lives. Now that the saloons have gone the temptation has been taken away from most of them. There were several other good reasons for our Eighteenth Amendment; what were they?

Who Brought about Prohibition and Why?

Before 1914, nine states had abolished the liquor traffic. During the following four years, twenty-three states abolished it, and nearly seventy per cent of the territory of the United States was "dry," the "wet" sections being the largest cosmopolitan areas. The Prohibition Law was enacted in November, 1918, to go into effect on June 30, 1919. This law was ratified by the Legislatures of forty-five states. The forty-sixth state, New Jersey, ratified it in 1922. Connecticut and Rhode Island have not ratified it.

Thus Prohibition became a law because it was the will of the vast majority of the people. Since then we have seen that the industrial groups, the working people as we call them (though every person in the land is or should be a worker of some sort), have gained immensely in health and prosperity. On the other hand, some of the so-called middle and upper classes have taken up drinking who never indulged before Prohibition became a law. They do this to "assert their rights," they say. What did we say in our temperance lesson last Quarter that a Christian would do in regard to his "rights" for the sake of others?

Dr. Frank Crane lists the following five groups as responsible for our Prohibition Law:

(1) The scientists who dug up the facts in the case, showing that the benefit from alcohol was at best problematical and occasional, and the injury from it universal, certain and appalling.

(2) The life insurance companies. You could not fool them. They had too much money invested in the law of averages of human life. They spoke only in statistics, but they were eloquent.

(3) The men of business. After all, America is primarily a business institution. Booze spoiled business. It honeycombed efficiency.

(4) The women. Average, decent, honest and serious-minded American women never liked the stuff.

(5) The war. When it came to concentrating 4,000,000 young men in camps and getting them into shape to fight the best trained enemy troops in the world, the booze issue became acute. Things were too critical to take any chances on not winning.

A British General's Opinion of Drink

Brigadier-General Crozier was asked why he was a teetotaler. "Drink knocks fifty per cent off a man's efficiency. That's why," he replied. He confessed that he had drunk beer and spirits and gave it up entirely thirteen years before, "because of the appalling examples I saw around me." He gave figures to prove how wealth was wasted on drink in Great Britain: the amount spent for defense was less than a third of that spent for drink, that on war pensions only a little over one-fifth, that on hospitals less than one-eighth as much.

"My experience in France has made me inflexible on the question of drink. What was the matter with the American army in France? That army was a 'dry' army, but nobody has ever suggested that the American army lacked anything which the use of spirits might have granted. Whereas, on the other hand, the use of alcohol certainly did lose us some efficiency. One colonel went into action waving a bottle of whiskey round his head, and a few days afterwards was the cause of thirteen of his officers being killed or wounded.

"The age in which we are living is the mechanical age. Men and women engaged in ordinary occupations today can afford to have no margin of error in their work. Error often means death, not only death to the person in error, but death to others. The constant procession of drunken motorists to the police courts demonstrates this fact. I personally saw a tippling motorist start out 'merry' and back his car into the river by mistake, thereby drowning himself and the occupants of the car who might even have saved themselves had they not all been in a befuddled state."

Nor would the General admit that alcohol makes a man really more merry. "I think that I, personally, am more cheery than I was fifteen years ago when I used to drink with the crowd for the sake of companionship."

Why the Prohibition Law Should Be Obeyed

We have discussed several reasons for having a prohibition law in our land; let us now give several reasons why it should be obeyed. First of all it is a law, and as good citizens we believe in obeying the laws. What does Paul say about a Christian's duty in regard to obedience to magistrates? (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Sentence Sermons

Be sober and temperate, and you will be happy.—Benjamin Franklin.

Drinking intoxicating liquor is like throwing sand in the bearings of a steam engine.—Thomas A. Edison.

Far from me be the gift of Bacchus—pernicious, inflaming wine, that weakens both body and mind.—Homer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What, according to Paul, is the way to deal with an enemy? 2. Commit to memory verses 9-21. 3. In what ways have countries been drawn closer together in the last few years? 4. What are the words about peace in the angels' song at the birth of the Prince of Peace? 5. Read Longfellow's poem, The Arsenal at Springfield. 6. Read Tennyson's Locksley Hall. 7. What do you think of the precept, "Wrong the wronger till he render right"?

PEACE AND GOOD WILL AMONG MEN

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12.21

LESSON Romans 12.1-21 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.5-11

ROMANS 12.12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another; 11 in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer; 13 communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. 19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath *of God*: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. 20 But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. A CALL TO CONSECRATION FOR SERVICE, verses 1 and 2. The meaning of these two long verses has been aptly expressed in these brief words: In view of all that God has done for us, we should henceforth live for him.

The One Volume Commentary paraphrases the verses thus: God's redeeming love should be answered by the true sacrifice and spiritual, ritual service of a life of purity and self-denial and work for God. Do not follow the fashion and customs of the worldly society around you, but let your ways of thinking be so changed by the Holy Spirit that you look for and recognize God's will and love to do it.

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

"No maimed or crippled thing might be offered to God by the Jewish law. If we would devote ourselves to God, we must see to it that we have a self to devote. Self-consecration is not a negative thing; it is a very positive thing. Even our Lord said in his high-priestly prayer: 'For their sakes I consecrate myself.' Self-consecration is the most effectual way in which we can serve God in our generation. That is the way in which the torch has been handed down by a long succession of runners since the gospel of Christ came into the world. Ask yourselves how you have been helped by others. You will find, I think, that the occasions have been most trivial, that the words spoken and the things done have been slight and unpremeditated. They have been sidelights upon the person's character, peeps into the inner life of one whose mind is kept in perfect peace because it rests on God; of one who sees God because his heart is pure. It is the sudden sting of self-reproach, the shame of the contrast, the longing to be like such a one, that sends a man to his knees as soon as he is alone. Sometimes when such a man or woman dies we learn for the first time, not without surprise, what he or she has been to many. Such persons have laid up a rich store of gratitude for being what God has helped them to be" (R. W. Inge).

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

"It is amazing what an immense amount of time and pains and money some people will spend in order to change their appearance. But there is another way of transformation, and it is Heaven's way. The transformation begins in the mind. It begins its wonderful work of rejuvenating by completely altering the world of thought, and imagination, and ideal, and fancy, and dreams. It transforms your thoughts of God, and your thoughts of yourself, and your thoughts of others, and your thoughts about everything. Desires, and aspirations, and judgments—all changed into something which

shares the life and likeness of God! And this is to transform life, and at every stage it is to make it beautiful.

"'But we can't do it,' you say. No, of course we cannot do it. The work of transformation is the work of our Lord. All this loveliness is the fruit of his Spirit. Give yourself over to him in absolute surrender, and he will work the transformation. For 'If a man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things become new'" (J. H. Jowett).

II. MAXIMS FOR GUIDANCE IN CHRISTIAN LIVING, verses 9-21. First of all and all-inclusive is love: love is the keynote that runs through all the precepts. Christian love is not a maudlin sentiment. "It is the practical recognition of a plain fact, involving a claim; the plain fact is that we are the children of God who made us and cares for us, and that we are members one of another, so closely knit together that, if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. The characteristic Christian attitude toward the happiness and the sorrow, the virtues and the sins, of others is that we should feel almost as if they were our own" (R. W. Inge).

Let love be without hypocrisy, let it be genuine love. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good: here we have two intense words, *abhor* meaning to shrink with horror from, to loathe, and *cleave* meaning as the flesh cleaves to the bones of the body. Moffatt's translation of verse nine is: Let your love be a real thing, with a loathing for evil and a bent for what is good.

"The characteristic of true, genuine love is to attach oneself to the good in a man, while detesting the evil in him. There cannot be love for what is evil, but whoever has love in him can see the good that there is in all" (William Sanday).

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another: here we have the Golden Rule of Luke 6.31 from a different standpoint. Love is the chief of the Christian virtues, and where love is, there will be no selfishness; others will be preferred before self.

"Condorcet has said in French, 'It is sweeter, more comfortable, if I dare so express it, to live for others, and it is only in that way that one truly lives for oneself.' That is a great truth, and, like most profound truths, there is pain in it, if we would live up to it or, for that matter, merely think earnestly about it. It means setting aside so much of oneself, for our instinct in loving is partly our demand to enrich ourselves. But the bigger the heart, the less its desires center upon itself, the less egotistical it becomes" (The Youth's Companion).

In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. Never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord (Moffatt's translation). Dr. Robert E. Speer thinks the word *fervent* does not do justice to the Greek word which Paul used, which means literally *boiling*. Paul's idea was of a man with a hot and burning heart.

"It would be an easy matter to run back over the history of the Church and show that movements are just as strong as the men in them are earnest. What made the Reformation what it was was the great robust German, the unbending Genevan, the unfrightened Scot back of it. Luther believed that when men had the truth they were to fight for the truth, were to carry the truth against the world, and with his strong shoulders by God's grace Luther moved the current of human history. And the current ran without the deflection of weakness or fear across the cool minds and hot hearts of John Calvin and John Knox.

"We need this earnest spirit in our service of God and man. In southern China, some years ago, I talked with a young Chinese Christian. When I was through with my questions, he said: 'Mr. Speer, I would like to ask you one question. You know what the Christians in your country are like. Are they all men and women of burning hearts?' What would you have said to him? What would you have said to him about yourself? Are we of burning hearts?" (Robert E. Speer).

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing steadfastly in prayer; com-

municating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality. Let your hope be a joy to you; be steadfast in truth; attend to prayer; contribute to needy saints, make a practise of hospitality (Moffatt's translation).

Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. "The Roman church, for more than two hundred years under the succession of heathen emperors, had abundant occasion to recall this injunction."

"'Bless them that persecute you.' Does that mean that we are to allow people to knock us down, walk over us, and we do nothing to retain our self-respect? Not at all. There is all the difference in the world between standing up for our rights and placing ourselves in the same class with those who persecute us. We are to learn that the one who wrongs us needs our prayers as well as just punishment."

Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Which calls for the stronger character, the rejoicing with those who rejoice, or the weeping with those who weep? Chrysostom, the great bishop of the Early Church, said: "Unenvious rejoicing with others is the more difficult, for nature itself inclines us to weep with others." We may safely say that it is easier to sympathize with those in sorrow when all goes well with one, than to sympathize with those with whom all goes well when one himself is sorrowing.

"Misery loves company" is a saying that all can understand. Does misery love to see the happiness of others? You are growing poorer, let us say, and your neighbor is growing richer; or you are ill and strengthless, and your neighbor has abounding health; or you lose your loved ones, and your neighbor keeps his all—do you easily rejoice with him? Yet this is a mark of a true Christian—not merely not envying, not merely hiding from him your unhappy looks, but actually sharing heartily in his joy.

Be of the same mind one toward another. Keep in harmony with one another (Moffatt's translation).

"If the new history of the world is to be the record of a real advance of mankind toward secure happiness, it will only be because the world has at last learned to replace the law of conquest by the law of co-operation" (W. J. Dawson).

Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Instead of being ambitious, associate with humble folk (Moffatt's translation). Be not wise in your own conceits. Be not self-conceited.

Genuine humility, a just judgment of oneself, is by no means a minor Christian virtue.

Render to no man evil for evil. He that is ruled by love will have no desire for revenge.

To "get even" with one who has wronged us is to be as guilty as the first wrong-doer. Two wrongs never made a right.

Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. "As nothing causes offense so much as offending men's prejudices, see that your conduct will commend itself as honorable to men."

If it is possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Be at peace with all men, if possible, as far as that depends on you (Moffatt's translation).

"It does not all lie in us, this matter of peaceable living. On the other side may be unkindness, injustice, selfishness, and a host of exasperating qualities that make for everything but peace, which we seem utterly unable to overrule. What then? The things we cannot change, however hard they may be, must needs be borne—be borne quietly if not comfortably. For our own relations to others we are responsible—our deeds, our words, our feelings; they must be peaceable to the extent of our power, whatever we may meet in return; but the part that does not lie in us we cannot control, and we cannot afford to let it draw our spirits into the storm center" (J. R. Miller).

Avenge not yourselves, beloved. This is the third time Paul here returns to this thought; see verses 14 and 17. But give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written (Dt. 32.35), Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the

Lord. But let the Wrath of God have its way; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will exact a requital—the Lord has said it (Moffatt's translation).

But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Paul here quotes Prov. 25.21, 22. Moffatt's translation—For in this way you will make him feel a burning sense of shame—is in accordance with the customary understanding of the metaphor, but not in accordance with its use in the Old Testament. In Ps. 18.8, 12, 13; 140.10: "coals of fire" is an expression for vengeance.

Doing good to an enemy is the only way in which a Christian may take vengeance.

Be not overcome of evil, as you would be if you tried to render evil for evil, but overcome evil with good, as you do in feeding your enemy. Do not let evil get the better of you; get the better of evil by doing good (Moffatt's translation).

"How significant is this climax to a chapter which deals with the practical things of the Christian life! It is as though the supreme test of the servant of Christ is his attitude toward evil, as the assailed and the assailant, in resistance and antagonism. It implies the certain peril from which none of us is immune. And this word carries to our hearts the inspiration of a divine declaration that evil is not invincible. God has made us for conquest, and we are not meant to be mastered by the force of sin" (J. Stuart Holden).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What lesson have we had about love? What does Paul there say that love will do? What, that it will not do? What did our Golden Text last week say about love?

The Epistle to the Romans

See our Introduction.

The Relation of the Twelfth Chapter of Romans to the Earlier Chapters

We naturally divide the Book of Romans into two main parts, and say that the first part is doctrinal and the second practical, but the very first sentence of the twelfth chapter, where we make the division, shows that the latter bears an intimate relation to the former. I beseech you therefore, says Paul. The force of therefore I give in Dr. Jowett's words: "It is at the gravest peril that we dissociate theology and ethics, and separate the thought of duty to men from the thought of relation to God. When the Apostle Paul, in the twelfth chapter of Romans, begins to be hortatory, preceptive, practical, it is because he has already prepared the rich bed in which these strong and winsome graces may be grown. Every precept in the twelfth chapter sends its roots right down through all the previous chapters, through the rich, fat soil of sanctification and justification, and the mysterious energies of redeeming grace."

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

There are those who say, "War has always been with us and there always will be wars. You cannot change human nature." But history proves the possibility of progress along all lines and gives us hope that some day war will yield to the greater power of reason.

The "Program of Peace" should include education of ourselves and of all young people under our influence. "The first and primal cause of war from the viewpoint of the Christian is the semi-pagan attitude of the so-called Christian world on the whole question of war, as a method of settling disputes between nations. Historians and students of human affairs are increasingly sure that the most powerful causes of war are the attitude of mind of ordinary citizens."

"A warless world can be established when—and only when—the Christians of the world really grapple with the task intelligently and with the enthusiasm and determination of a new crusade."

Pupils in the Intermediate Department may be led up to a discussion of the way to prevent wars among nations from a discussion of the way to prevent trouble among individuals. If in the past there has been a bit of friction in the class, a lack of good will among its members, and this has been removed, your pupils have

readily seen in subsequent co-operation among all, the value of good will. It is this good will, or Christian love, which Paul counsels in our text from his letter to the Romans, and which, if possessed by nations, would outlaw war.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE MESSAGE AND PROGRAM OF WORLD PEACE

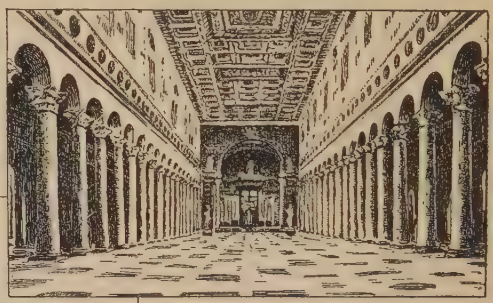
Beginning the Lesson

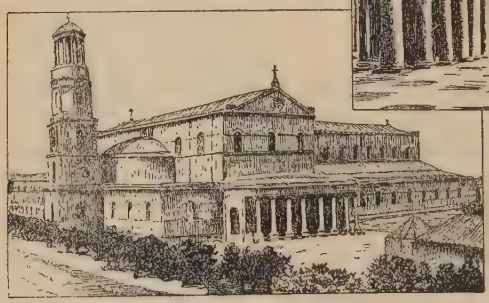
Today we have a peace lesson, with the general title of Peace and Good Will among Men. It is not based, however, upon the familiar words of the second chapter of Luke, but upon sundry exhortations written by Paul to the Romans. Let us see how many of verses 9 to 21 have a direct bearing upon our topic, and how if their counsel were followed out by men and nations, world peace would result.

Let Love Be Genuine

Peace is not merely the cessation of war between nations—the disuse of navies and armies. Such a condition may be only the absence of outward hostilities. Real peace is not an external but an internal condition.

You have seen two boys fighting on the street, when suddenly a policeman comes in sight. At once all is serene, and the boys appear very innocently occupied in something else. Is there peace between them? Look at the flashing eyes and the threatening fists when the policeman's back is turned. War is heaving and sputtering out of sight. Compulsory arbitration is something like that. It is merely war under constraint. Certainly, it is better than fighting and killing, but it is not what the angels sang of, The Prince of Peace will not acknowledge it. Acting under international treaties, the stronger powers may force unwilling nations to put on sheep's clothing for a while, but if inwardly they are ravening wolves the era of "peace on earth, good will toward men" has not arrived. Treaties have been made and broken at convenience heretofore. Strong nations can agree, in theory, when self-interest seems to point the way, that war shall be no more. But let sudden stress come upon them; let suspicion of one another's good faith and purposes arise—as, for example, if a powerful hostile battleship fleet should appear unexpectedly off our coasts—then, unless there were a deeper basis of peace than mere treaties, the war spirit would flame from one end of the nation to the other, and it could not be controlled.





St. Paul's Without the Walls, Rome

Genuine peace can come only from love in the heart. Submission to the rule of the Prince of Peace will be far more effective than international arbitration. The 9th, 10th, 14th, and 18th to 21st verses of the 12th chapter of Romans should form the articles of a universal treaty of brotherhood between man and man.

Draw up your Peace Treaty. Let it be thoroughly understood and signed as a solemn covenant by your members. Shut your doors for a while and pray earnestly for help and blessing that your lives may be fountains of gentleness; that you may avoid all occasions of strife in home, in business, in church, and social intercourse, that you may be, as individual members of a great crusade, truly makers of peace. Turn away not only the battle, but the desire for battle, from the gates. So shall

you be heralds of the coming age when world peace shall reign on the earth.—Eugene Thwing, in The Christian Herald.

Lighting the Lamps of Peace

August 3, 1914, when Great Britain had decided to stand with Belgium and France, Lord Grey stood with a friend in front of the Foreign Office as a lamplighter passed. "The lamps are going out all over Europe," exclaimed Lord Grey; "we shall not see them lighted again in our life-time." Fourteen years have passed and the lights are burning everywhere, although some of them are still quite dim.

In an article in The Presbyterian Advance, of December, 1926, William C. Allen lists a number of world movements that will make for international peace:

"Remarkable evidences of a trend toward a spirit of internationalism and friendship is found in the attitude of many young people in Europe and the United States. David Lloyd George challenged the youth of the world to take up the matter of peace in his address before the International Convention of the Christian Endeavor Union during this year. He declared: 'The supreme task of the rising generation is the abolition of war. Youth must substitute organized justice for organized violence. The most horrible, the most devastating and the greatest war will yet come unless youth tears that idea (that war is inevitable) from the heart of civilization.'

"Five thousand youths from thirty nations participated in an International Democratic Congress of Peace held forty miles from Paris last summer. There was cordial friendly intercourse between the French and German delegates. All were drawn from many social classes, including students, artisans and representatives of many religions. The fact that thousands of young people from many lands thus happily met together should give a great impetus to world peace. The British Federation of Youths includes over twenty youth organizations working on behalf of international understanding.

"The nineteenth World's Conference of the Young Men's Christian Association was held at Helsingfors, Finland, last August. There were present 1,500 delegates from fifty countries. Thirty languages were represented. A large number of the delegates were boys under twenty years of age. These youngsters were very keen on the subjects of peace and war. At the close of this great conference a camp fire ceremony was observed. As the national groups contributed their logs to the flame each group in its mother tongue repeated the words: 'We leave this fire with visions of a great Christian Fellowship, conscious of differences but resolved to love.'

"An Anti-Conscription Manifesto, calling upon the League of Nations to propose the abolition of compulsory military service in all countries, is gathering momentum. Among the signers are distinguished English, French and German citizens. The Manifesto in part declares: 'It is debasing human dignity to force men to give up their lives, or to inflict death against their will or without conviction as to the justice of their action.' It concludes by calling upon all men and women of good will to create a public opinion which shall induce governments to rid the world of a dangerous spirit and to 'open the way to a new era of freedom within nations and of fraternity between them.'

"At the present time there are about 10,000 students from many foreign lands in the colleges and universities of this country. If we treat them rightly they will add to the friendships abroad which America so much needs. To illustrate: there have been 283 students of fifty nationalities in the International Institute of Columbia University, alone, this year.

"Great organizations of women at home and abroad are emphasizing an enlarged sense of responsibility in connection with the maintenance of world peace.

"Influential church leaders in America and abroad are now fully recognizing the damage done to spiritual and material life, as well as to church life, through war and preparation for it. The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, steered by church leaders from thirty countries, makes its deep impression wherever it operates. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, now including denominations aggregating over twenty millions in membership, has taken strong official action adverse to militarism.

"People of all sorts are, more than ever, realizing that war constitutes the quintessence of foolishness, the antithesis of the religion of Jesus Christ."

World Wide Friendships for Children

"The only encouraging thing in the world is babies." So said General Armstrong in the dark days following the Civil War. They are humanity's new chance, the fresh start which makes hopes possible and dreams capable of realization.

How can we enlist this greatest force in the world, the great unspent force of the new generation, for achievement of the dream which we cherish of a world of Peace and Good Will? There are many answers. I will touch on one only, one of the most vital importance.

It has been said that we live in a book-made civilization—and this is to a great extent true—a fact full, from our infancy on, of dangers but also of possibilities. In our children's reading lies one of the most powerful, and certainly one of the most ready-to-hand, means of bringing about World Friendship.

Race hatreds, nationalistic antagonisms, militaristic ideals have been always fostered by song and story, while lack of knowledge as to real facts about other peoples, ignorance of their human ways and worthwhile achievements, have kept people in fear and hatred of each other.

"I don't know him, that's why I hate him," said Carlyle characteristically. Just to know about people is a great step, and children are always interested in hearing about children of other countries. One can begin with the tiniest, if only with pictures. The beautiful set of posters of children of many lands, published by the Child Welfare Association, is an ornament to any nursery, and The Friendship Press has excellent material along the same line.

Nursery Tales from Many Lands, a charming little volume, is suggestive of a wealth of material which exists for the very youngest, such as Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes and the beautiful collections of folk-lore and fairy tales of every race and country which have lately been brought out by leading publishers.

A large class of children's books deals with other countries through fictitious stories based on real life, or stories of real heroes. These are pre-eminently for the junior age and early adolescence, though such a charming little picture of real Japanese life as With Taro and Hana in Japan appeals to the youngest. Three beautiful volumes on children of other countries, published by the Book House, are also for tiny tots.

There are wonderful classics, which every child should know, like Heidi, and her successors, Hans Brinker, Little Boy Lost, Captain Kituk, Ungava Bob, and others, which can be found in simple, inexpensive editions or in most beautiful holiday attire. Nobody's Boy and Nobody's Girl give appealing pictures of two very real little French children.

To Anita Ferris and Margaret Applegarth, children owe a group of beautifully told stories of real life in other countries. They are written from the standpoint of bringing children to know and love other children, and in a simple way understand their problems.

Some very fine books have recently been published with the definite purpose of holding up ideals of Peace and Good Will. Heroes in Friendship, The Way of Friendship, Paths of Peace, are among a number of excellent little volumes published by the Oxford University Press. Heroes of Peace, Victors of Peace, Heroes of the Nations, Stories of Brotherhood, and quite a few others, strike a new and very constructive note.

Two interesting volumes of a series called Books of Good Will have been brought out by the National Council for Prevention of War. Never Again is another excellent collection of stories, making for world peace, which have appeared in Everyland, that very fine monthly magazine for all children.

For older boys and girls, a goodly number of fascinating new biographies and histories have been specially published.

What such books can do may be briefly summed up:

First—Interest in other peoples. Provincialism and aloofness are both the result of ignorance. The person who, as a child, has loved his Russian or Korean story book is not apt to be utterly indifferent to what goes on among those peoples later on.

Second—Kinship, a sense of the humanness of everybody. Stories about real children of other countries show how alike we all are in spite of differences.

Third—Admiration and appreciation of other peoples. Just to know more of their achievements, their art, their stories, their great men, to be willing to learn from others, is something to be cultivated.

Fourth—Helpfulness, the ideal of service, the sense of mutual dependence, generosity, fairness in our opinions and actions.

Books—What a power they are! Let us enlist them on the side of a new world of Friendship and Good Will. Let us start with the children who are the makers of Tomorrow.—Agnes Wilson Osborne, in the New Jersey Club Woman.

The Sure Way to Peace

If men would give to Christ his rightful place, peace would be secure. And we must do it each one for himself, and go forth by life and lip to commend him, his faith and service, to others. It is the way that goes to the root of all things, the one sure and deep way to the world's brotherhood and peace.—Charles Brown.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion

1. What is the teaching of the New Testament in regard to war?

2. The duty of educating the rising generation away from fighting in all its forms.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What was the story which Paul told the brethren on reaching Jerusalem? 2. Were the brethren wise in the request which they made of Paul? 3. Was Paul wise in making the compromise? 4. Give the substance of Paul's speech to the mob. 5. Why was the mob so furious? 6. What instances of religious prejudice and fanaticism have occurred in our own day?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE WORLD A NEIGHBORHOOD

Beginning the Lesson

Begin with Explanations and Comments.

The World a Neighborhood

"Isn't the world a small place after all!" we exclaim, when in a distant place, we unexpectedly meet friends from home. More than ever now-a-days do we realize the smallness of this earth of ours. Sitting quietly at home we can listen to lectures given in Boston, opera sung in New York, United States bands playing in Washington, music coming from Chicago. By airplane we can go in a few hours from London to Paris, from Paris to Berlin, from Berlin to Bagdad and all points east. We can carry on a conversation with people across the continent or across the sea. This means that we are all nearer neighbors than we formerly were. There is no East nor West, as Kipling said.

And what is the real meaning of neighbor? Somebody—a lawyer, once asked Jesus that question, you remember. And Jesus led the lawyer himself to answer it, and acknowledge that our neighbor is one to whom we have a chance of showing good will.

One of the great examples of nations living in good will is seen in North America, where Canada and the United States share a boundary three thousand miles long without any forts, armed guards, or cannon.

Let us Learn to Know our Distant Neighbors

When you go to college you will find there young men or women from distant lands. Some of their customs at home are different from ours, and you will find that they have what you call "prejudices." They will think some of your ways of doing things strange, and they will not agree with some of your ideas. But as you work with them you will understand the reason for their "prejudices," and you will learn to like them and will become their friend.

I know a High School boy who has corresponded for several years in French with a Dutch boy, and Holland has become for him a friendly and intimate country because of his friend who lives there. Many of our High Schools arrange an exchange of correspondence, and if you have an opportunity to enter into this you will find that it will enlarge your idea of friendship and neighborliness, even if you think you are only practising Spanish or French or German.

A well-known educator summarizes these means for a better acquaintance between members of different races which will in due time make the world one brotherhood in which war shall be unknown:

"We need to plan very generally for the exchange of letters, for actual personal contacts and friendships, for acts of mutual helpfulness, for the exchange of courtesies, for the appreciation of each other's history, music, literature, art. The singing of folk songs of other countries, the playing of the games of other children, the telling of characteristic folk tales and fairy tales, the interchange of pictures, the study of geography and travel study; the exhibit of clothing, customs, and manufactured articles of different peoples; the holding of pageants, international athletic meets, and young people's conferences, and the interchange of students and professors be-

tween colleges and universities of different countries—all these help to a better international and inter-racial acquaintance, appreciation and friendship, and tend powerfully to reduce the likelihood of war."

A Project in World Friendship

Through "The Committee on World Friendship among Children" the children of our land have been sending thousands of "Mama Voice" dolls beautifully dressed to their friends, the children of Japan, on the occasion of the doll festival there known as the *Hina Matsuri.* This is a three-day festival held early in March, and is one of the most pleasing of all Japan's interesting national festival days. From the children of America a great company of dolls have gone to Japan to be distributed by the Japanese Government to the children in the public schools there. Write to the Committee at 289 Fourth Ave., New York City, for information regarding the sending of these doll messengers of friendship to Japan and also for their friendship project with Mexico.

Organizations that Make for Good Will among World Neighbors

Many of you are ardent scouts, enjoying all the activities of hiking, camping, collecting specimens, and working for Merit Badges. It is a great thing to be "a brother to every other Boy Scout," to be "a sister to every other Girl Scout." These families of brothers and sisters have grown very rapidly, for now there are Scouts over all the world.

Another organization that brings many into one big family is the Junior Red Cross. The Red Cross emblem is sacred and respected by all. It emphasizes the glorious duty of saving life, relieving distress, and being a real "neighbor." It stands for internationalism and good will.

A stanza by Ethel Blair Jordan, printed in Junior Red Cross News, tells how to do away with war.

"In hearts too young for enmity
There lives the way to make men free;
When children's friendships are world wide,
New ages will be glorified.
Let child love child and strife will cease.
Disarm the hearts, for that is peace."

A Pledge of Peace and Good Will

Upon the crest of the Andes Mountains between Argentina and Chile stands a colossal statue of Christ in the attitude of benediction, commemorating the peaceful settlement of boundary disputes between these two nations, a pledge of peace and good will.

This statue, designed by an Argentine sculptor, was made of bronze melted down from old cannon, and was paid for by the women of Buenos Ayres. On a tablet these words are inscribed: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Argentines and Chileans break the peace to which they have pledged themselves at the feet of Christ the Redeemer."

Sentence Sermons

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—Jesus.

There is nothing that ties love so firmly as sharing both joy and pain one with another.—Chrysostom.

My first wish is to see this plague of mankind, war, banished from the earth.—George Washington.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Give the course of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem from the time he left Miletus. 2. How many times on this voyage was he warned not to go to Jerusalem? 3. Why did he persist in going, as told in Acts 20.22-24? 4. How was he received in Jerusalem? 5. What happened that led to his being "about to be brought into the castle"? 6. Where was the castle? 7. What was the name of the Chief Captain? (Acts 23.26.) 8. What scene of mob violence did Paul witness when a young man and what was his part therein? 9. When had another mob in Jerusalem cried, "Away with him"? (Lk. 23.13-25.)

PAUL'S EXPERIENCES IN JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6.10

LESSON Acts 21.17-23.35 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 6.10-20

ACTS 21.37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? 38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? 39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

22 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, 24 the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. 25 And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. 27 And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am *a Roman* born. 29 They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL'S REQUEST, 21.37-39. Read the earlier verses of this chapter and see The Historical Background. Paul is standing on the stairway leading from the outer court of the temple up to the Tower of Antonia, and before him is Claudius Lysias, chief captain of the band. "May I say something unto thee?" courteously Paul asked, speaking in the Greek language. In surprise Lysias asked in his turn, "Dost thou know Greek?"

"And was it not a needless surprise? Paul was a university man. He was cultured to his fingertips. He had one of the greatest brains of history. We all often reproduce the rôle of the Chief Captain. We were amazed how well read and intelligent was that unassuming man. But our surprise was needless. Assumption is not culture. The spiritual quality of men and women often surprise us. We say, "I never thought that man was such a Christian." "I never dreamed that woman could have been such a heroine amid sorrow." But we did not know them any more than Lysias knew Paul. And we did not know their inner life of devotion to the Savior of the world. We knew not their prayers, their unseen sessions with their Bible, their gracious investiture with the Spirit of Christ" (Dinsdale T. Young).

"Art thou not then the Egyptian," continued Lysias, "who before these days stirred up sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" This Egyptian was the latest inciter to revolution in Jerusalem. Josephus in his Jewish Wars says that he led a rabble out of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, promising to show them that the walls would fall down at his command. The Assassins, or Sicarii, Dagger men, were members of a secret society. A large number of them were killed or captured by Felix, the Procurator, but their leader, the Egyptian, apparently made his escape. Why should Lysias assume that Paul was the notorious Egyptian brigand? The official documents found among the papyri are sometimes accompanied by an official description, such as: "I, the son of Ageo —with straight hair, and a scar on my left chin." Someone, therefore, has offered the suggestion that Paul had a scar like the one in the description of the brigand. Certainly he had been beaten and stoned often enough to have had his face covered with permanent scars.

"How little do they see what is, who frame
Their hasty judgment upon that which seems" (Southey).

Proudly Paul answered, "I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." J. Rendell Harris recalls in The Expository Times, the first verse of The Ion by Euripides, where Athens is described by Hermes in the words [in Greek], "There is no mean city of the Greeks." "The apostle described Tarsus as a second Athens in terms that would be familiar to any educated person moderately well read in the Greek masterpieces," Dr. Harris thinks. "The commandant said to himself, 'A gentleman, clearly, and a scholar.'"

Paul was proud of being a citizen of Tarsus. It had a warm place in his heart. Sir William M. Ramsay, writing in Pauline and Other Studies, reminds us that we must bear in mind that the feeling of an ancient citizen for his own city was much stronger than that which is in modern times entertained toward one's native town. "All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed towards one's city," he tells us. "The educated native of a Cilician city like Tarsus regarded the country Cilicia as implying rudeness and barbarism, and prided himself on being a Hellene rather than a Cilician; for Hellas [Greece] meant to him a certain standard and ideal of culture and municipal freedom. He was a Tarsian, but Tarsus was and had long been a Hellenic city, and the Greek-speaking Tarsians were either Hellenes or Jews, but not Cilicians in the sense of nationality, only Cilicians as members of the province. Moreover, citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can migrate to a new city, and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to another city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his fatherhood, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. The city that was his fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul."

"Give me leave to speak unto the people"—this was Paul's request of the Chief Captain. "Get me safely out of this, away from this mob," would have been the anxious plea of most men in Paul's position, and perhaps it was surprise which led Lysias to allow Paul to speak to the howling Jews below him.

"Great duties are before me, and great songs;
And whether crowned or crownless when I fall,
It matters not, so as God's work is done" (Alexander Smith).

II. PAUL'S ADDRESS, 21.30 to 22.21. Then Paul, torn and bleeding as he was, and chained to two soldiers, stood upon the stairway above that howling mob who were thirsting for his blood, himself perhaps the only calm man there, and addressed them in their own language, Aramaic, a dialect of the Hebrew. He defended himself from the charge that he was an enemy of the people, of the law, and of the temple. He told them that he was an Israelite, and though born in Tarsus he had been educated in Jerusalem, at the feet of their famous rabbi Gamaliel. He had been most zealous in persecuting the Christians, had even started for Damascus with letters from the Sanhedrin allowing him to seize and bring back in chains all the Christians he could find. Many of those to whom he was speaking must have known and recalled these facts. Next, he wished to defend his Christian faith, and he told them about his wonderful conversion, about his interview with Ananias and the restoration of his sight, and about his return to Jerusalem and his baptism. If the Crucified Jesus had appeared to him in such power, then he must be the Messiah whom he as a Pharisee had so longed to see; and if the Risen Jesus is really the Messiah, then Paul must, as a righteous Israelite, yield him willing obedience and bear his witness for him.

Yet another aim had Paul, the aim of all his preaching; he would win even that mob over to a favorable opinion of this Jesus who could change in a moment of time a bigoted Pharisee into an active Christian. And finally, he justified his work among the Gentiles as the fulfilling of the express command of his Lord.

III. THE MOB CLAMORS FOR PAUL'S DEATH, 22.22, 23. The mob had listened to Paul until he spoke the word *Gentiles,* then they yelled, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." They tore their garments, and clutching dust in their hands, tossed it up in the air as Shimei had done when he cursed David. What a picture of frenzied hate!

IV. PAUL IS SAVED FROM SCOURGING BY HIS CLAIM OF ROMAN CITIZENSHIP, 22.24-29. The rage of the Jews evidently impressed Lysias, for he ordered Paul brought into the castle and examined by scourging to ascertain what all the shouting had been about. Paul allowed himself to be tied up for the ordeal

and then calmly said to the centurion standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The Roman law was very careful about the rights of Roman citizens. We read of cities being deprived of their charters because of indignities done to Roman citizens. Tulley, in one of his orations, exclaims, "It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen, but an unpardonable one to beat him."

In great excitement the centurion ran to the Chief Captain and told him that Paul was a Roman. Lysias hastened to Paul. "Art thou a Roman?" "I am." "With a great sum obtained I this citizenship," commented the captain. "But I am a Roman born," proudly returned Paul.

At a criminal trial in England a witness feared to tell all she knew because she had been intimidated by the friends of the prisoner. The examining counsel drew this fact from her, and the judge exclaimed: "Tell all that you know, and remember that the whole power of England is behind you to protect you, so you need not be afraid." The whole power of Rome was behind Paul when he quietly said, "I am a Roman born."

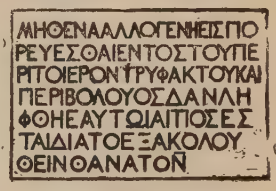
"And Lysias had a rude awakening. He had underestimated the man whom he confronted. He deemed him an 'Egyptian.' He thought him a mobocrat. He imagined him a leader of murderers. And lo, this man knows Greek! He is an orator in Hebrew. He is a Roman, too, and free born. The Chief Captain discovers that this despised man is altogether his superior. Ah! we, too, are constantly underestimating men and things" (Dinsdale T. Young).

Those who were about to scourge Paul hastily left, and the Chief Captain himself feared the consequences of having ordered the binding of a Roman.

"The sanity and adroitness of Paul impress us. He is like a champion in combat. He will not throw away a single advantage which can legitimately further his cause. His Roman citizenship was to him a gift of God's Providence to be used as widely as possible. Whatever a man's inherited possessions—personality, fortune, distinction of birth, academic reputation—they can all be consecrated to the service of the Master" (R. C. Gillie).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Purify thyself, 21.24. In India at the present time a distinguished native who by certain necessary compliances with Western customs in a journey to Europe has violated the rules of his caste, is required to undergo strange ceremonies of purification on his return, in order that he may be restored. This was perhaps the nature of Paul's purification. It involved an admission that he had not done so in his journeys.—Christopher N. Johnston, in St. Paul and His Mission to the Roman Empire.



Facsimile of Inscription on a Slab from Herod's Temple

He brought Greeks into the temple, 21.28. A flight of forty-five steps led from the outer court of the temple to the inner, or Court of the Women, at whose foot was a stone balustrade. Beyond this stone fence no Gentile was allowed to pass.

Notices were attached to this balustrade bearing an inscription in Greek or Latin which read: "Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Anyone trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty." Here is a reproduction of an inscription on a slab which in 1871 M. Clermont-Ganneau found built into the walls of a small mosque in the Via Dolorosa. The slab was originally in Herod's temple, and Paul may often have gazed upon it.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What experiences with mobs has Paul had? Where had he been bound with chains? How had he been saved from scourging in Philippi? When Paul first comes into the story of The Acts, what was he doing? What have you learned about Tarsus?

From Miletus to Jerusalem

After leaving Miletus the coasting vessel in which Paul was traveling stopped on

successive nights at the islands of Cos and Rhodes, and on the third day arrived at Patara. Here Paul embarked in a swifter sailing merchant-ship that was bound directly for Phœnicia. At Tyre the ship's cargo was unloaded, and the seven days' stay gave Paul an opportunity to visit the Christians in that city. They urged Paul not to hazard his life in Jerusalem, but he was not to be turned from his purpose. When the time for departure came, the little company of men, women and children came with him to the beach, where prayer was offered and farewells were said.

Coin of Cos

From Tyre the journey was continued to Ptolemais, a day was spent with the Christian community there, and then the ship went on to Cæsarea. In the home of Philip of Cæsarea Paul spent several days. The prophet Agabus, who had come on from Jerusalem, warned him of danger ahead, and his traveling companions joined with the disciples of Cæsarea in beseeching him not to continue his journey to Jerusalem. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" cried the apostle. "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "The will of the Lord be done," then said his friends.

From Cæsarea, Luke states with unusual exactness, "we took up our baggage and went to Jerusalem." In their company were disciples from Cæsarea accompanied by Mnason, an old disciple with whom they were to live.

Events in Jerusalem

Paul came to Jerusalem with a wonderful story of how the gospel message had been received among the Grecian Jews and Gentiles, and with abundant proof of their regard for the mother church in the collection which they had contributed out of their deep poverty. The leaders of the church at Jerusalem received Paul cordially, and after his recital they glorified God. Luke's account, however, makes no mention of their gratitude for the help of the Gentile Christians. Apparently they passed at once to what was uppermost in their own minds.

"You see, brother Paul," the elders said, "what great numbers of Jews here have become followers of the Way, and they are all zealous for the scrupulous keeping of the law." To those Hebrew Christians Paul's wonderful missionary success would be of little moment compared with the question whether Paul himself kept every jot and tittle of the ancient law.

"These new converts will hear of your coming, Paul, and will regard you with suspicion," continued the brethren, "for they have been told that you teach the Jews to forsake the laws of Moses and the customs of our fathers." Then they asked Paul to make a concession which, they thought, would win over his critics. Let him pay the charges for four men who had made a Nazirite vow and purify himself with them, that all might see that he observed the law. This proposal seemed to Paul, to paraphrase one of his own statements, only the becoming a Jew to the Jews that he might gain the Jews. The proposal involved no matter of principle, and he consented. The expenses of the sacrifices for the young men were considerable, consisting for each of them a lamb for a burnt-offering, a lamb for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, and also meat-offerings and drink-offerings. (Num. 6.14, 15).

The scheme of the elders did not turn out as expected, because Jews from Asia, Paul's old enemies, stirred up a riot. It was Pentecost, and Jews from over all the world were in Jerusalem. These men from Asia seized Paul and cried out: "Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law, and this place." "Moreover," they added, "he brought Greeks into the temple and hath defiled this holy place." By the *temple* they meant the inner court, the Court of the Israelites, into which no Gentile might enter.

The foundation for the charge made against Paul was that they had seen him in the temple with the Jews for whose vows he was paying, and had jumped to the conclusion (or made up the accusation) that they were Greeks, because they had seen him earlier on the streets of Jerusalem with a Greek, Trophimus the Ephesian, no doubt one of the custodians of the collection brought for the poor of Jerusalem.

All the city was moved; the mob dragged Paul out of the temple enclosure that its sacred precincts might not be polluted by his blood, and the temple guard hastily shut the gates between the courts.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We are now back to the old, familiar places in Palestine, long since lost sight of in Luke's narrative—Phœnicia and Tyre and Ptolemais and Cæsarea and Jerusalem.

The scene of our lesson text is in the temple courts and on the stairs leading up to the Tower of Antonia. The Tower of Antonia was a fortress and a castle all in one, erected at the northeast corner of the temple area. It was an immense structure divided into splendid apartments. Josephus says that having everything necessary in itself, it seemed a city, while in magnificence it resembled a palace. At each corner there was a tower, the tallest being the one which overlooked the whole temple area. In this tower soldiers were always quartered, and when the Jews celebrated their great annual festivals an extra number of soldiers was always brought there to watch the people.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Beaten, half-killed as he was by the mob, when rescued by the soldiers Paul's first thought was not for his own safety or comfort but whether he might in any way win some of them for Christ. There as everywhere "he put himself into the mental attitude of his auditors; made it his business to understand the men he was talking to. To the Greek he became a Greek; to the Jew he became a Jew; he became all things to all men. There was no man he did not aim to understand; no man in whose place he did not try to put himself that he might put life into him."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE AND FANATICISM

Beginning the Lesson

The Jews at this period were in a most inflammable state of mind, F. W. Farrar tells us. "Just as in recent years before the Great War Turkish soldiers were always prepared to pour down from the house of the Turkish Government on the first occurrence of any discord between the Greek and Latin Churches, so it was the custom of the Roman Commander of the Tower of Antonia to post detachments of soldiers along the roof of the cloister which connected the fortress with the temple area—ready at any moment to rush down the stairs and plunge into the very midst of the crowded worshipers. What occurred on one occasion was singularly characteristic. While standing there at guard, one of the Roman soldiers, weary of having nothing to do, and disgusted with watching what he despised as the mummeries of these hateful Jews, expressed his contempt for them by a gesture of insult. Instantly the Jews were plunged into a paroxysm of fury. They cursed the new Procurator, and began to pelt the soldiers with stones. Fearing that the Antonia detachment would be too weak to cope with so savage an onslaught, Cumanus marched his entire force around from the Prætorium. At the clash of their footsteps, and the gleam of their swords, the wretched, unarmed mass of pilgrims was struck with panic, and made a rush to escape. The gates of the temple were choked up, and a multitude, variously stated at ten to twenty thousand, were trampled and crushed to death."

The Mother Church

Twenty years had passed away since the formation of the church, and the arresting fact here is that the church in Jerusalem is not seen. Paul was alone, and would have been beaten brutally to death by an infuriated mob, had he not been rescued by the Roman power. When once the seventh chapter of this book of The Acts has been passed, where the record of the first things in Jerusalem come to an end, whenever the Church emerges in her representative capacity, she is seen attempting compromise, pursuing the policy of accommodation. It was a little difficult for her to receive the testimony of Peter concerning the work in the house of Cornelius. She was supicious of the movement in Samaria. With difficulty there was wrested from her the granting of the charter of freedom to the Gentiles. She pursued a policy of accommodation, receiving into her fellowship those who had made no break with Judaism. James declared to Paul, who had come up bearing with him gifts from

the Gentile churches, with the love of his Lord burning in his heart, that there were multitudes of believing Jews, all of whom were observing the rites and ceremonies of Judaism. This was in itself a very remarkable admission and confession. It may of course be said that these men had attempted thus to secure safety. It was undoubtedly the easier path to admit to the fellowship of the church men who confessed Christ, and really believed in him, who nevertheless compromised with Judaism, by still observing its rites and ceremonies; but that policy of accommodation, policy of compromise, had weakened the church.

The issue is revealed in this page. The church had no influence in Jerusalem. In this tragic hour, when this man, bearing in his body the stigmata of Jesus, ought to have been welcomed with open heart and arms by the church; he stood alone in the midst of the pitiless scorn and brutality of an angry mob, and had to be protected by Roman power. The church had neither power nor protest. She had lost both by her policy of accommodation.—G. Campbell Morgan, in The Acts of the Apostles.

The People who Would not Listen

Writing in The Christian Advocate, Dr. Lynn H. Hough says of this scene:

"'There are no real leaders,' the cynic was saying. 'People will not listen to things they do not want to hear. What is called leadership consists in finding out what the people think and in saying it for them in more telling words than they can command.'

"This is one of those half falsehoods which are all the more dangerous because of the truth which they contain. Many of the great leaders of the world have persisted in saying things which the people did not want to hear until they became ready to hear them. But often it is true that the people will not listen to a truth which conflicts with their prejudices.

"The excited Jews at the foot of the stairs where Paul spoke were quiet with an almost painful stillness while in the familiar accents of the Hebrew tongue he told them the story of his life. They felt the commanding, magnetic quality of his speech. They were thrilled by the note of spiritual authenticity in the story of his conversion. But when he came to speak of a ministry to the Gentiles, and of that ministry as a divine inspiration coming to him, generations of narrow, national prejudice closed their ears and they could hear no more. There was a swift reaction. The fury of oriental passion possessed them, and in a moment they were shouting, gesticulating, throwing off their garments, casting dust in the air, and madly crying for Paul's death. They seemed like an incarnate fury.

"Prejudice does not have such a violent expression in the characteristic scenes of the modern world, but it is still true every day and everywhere that prejudice is closing human ears to truth which they need to hear."

Why the Jerusalem Jews were Fanatical

The burst of fury, expressed in gesture which anybody who has ever seen two orientals quarreling can understand, looks fitter for a mad-house than an audience in their senses. And what was it all for? Because Gentiles were to be allowed to share in Israel's privileges! And what were the privileges which they thus jealously monopolized? The favor and protection of the God who, as their own prophets had taught them, is the God of the whole earth, and revealed to Israel that Israel might reveal him to the world.

The less they entered into the true possession of their heritage, the more savagely they resented sharing it with the nations. The more their prerogative became a mere outward thing, the more they snarled at anyone who proposed to participate in it. To seek to keep religious blessings to one's self is a conclusive proof that they are not really possessed. If we have them we shall long to impart them.—Alexander Maclaren, in The Acts of the Apostles.

The Lesson for Today

The concern of these Jews about orthodoxy, their fear of polluting the temple, their outcry against a man like Paul as the destroyer of religion when he was really one of its most profound builders, is all very much like what has been happening in the Christian Church throughout the ages. Does not this lesson enforce upon us the supreme need of giving to the high, holy, simple elements of religion the dominant place? If these Jews had been men of love and kindliness, they could not have acted against Paul as they did. If we, in turn, have enshrined the love of God in our hearts and the love of our fellowmen, which is akin to the love of God, as the deep and commanding things, we shall be saved from the sad exhibitions of narrowness

and bigotry that have darkened the way of the development of historic Christianity. —The Congregationalist.

The Gentile and the Jew

It was spring in town, and we knew it only because the Passover had been celebrated. Somewhere, I knew, there must be lilacs and cherry trees, and I wandered out one Saturday afternoon, leaving the Sabbath stillness of the ghetto street, the stifling smells, ages old, the dust and the grime, the spirit's prison.

I walked on and on. I reached a path that led through the fields and into the distant woods. On either side were lilacs in full bloom, meadow larks were rising full throated from the sweet carpeted earth, and I walked amid all this splendor as if in my Father's garden somewhere in Palestine.

I buried my head in lilacs, I broke off heavy branches of the rich perfume, and then a man's voice cried, "Jew boy!" The flowers grew heavy in my arms and dropped to the ground, the birds seemed silent, and I smelled the foul, familiar ghetto air.

I had broken lilacs, he said. They were his, his father's. He himself was studying to be a priest, a holy man, and now was for a time at home; because even in monasteries it was spring.

My punishment, he said, should be that I must kiss the cross, a cross of brass which hung upon his girdle of white stout rope, round about a seamless robe, such as he wore whom he called Lord, whose image he was pressing to my lips, and whom he loved so much that he must hate the little Jew who was breathing lilacs and washing off the ghetto stains in dews of May.

I would not kiss the cross; instead I struck it, and it fell into the dust. I spat upon it thrice, to prove I knew no fear, and to cleanse myself of that hated touch.

The age-long rage of Gentile against Jew burst forth. He smote me with the rope, he beat me with the cross, and pressed it to my bleeding lips to kiss; then, that first sacramental blood grew sweet upon my lips, my tears and blood mingled, and lying prostrate there, the birds sang, I breathed more deeply the scent of lilacs, and near me I felt a Presence which I could not touch, or name or dared to speak It, had I known. I did not know that somewhere, on some height, which men call depth, where length meets breadth and forms a cross—we two should meet again.—Condensed from My First Communion, by Edward A. Steiner.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Paul as an orator. Review his speeches at Antioch, Acts 13, at Lystra, Acts 14, at Athens, Acts 17, at Miletus, Acts 20, and study his speeches at his arrest and trials, Acts 22, 23, 24 and 26. See Chapter VIII of Paul, the All-Round Man, by Robert E. Speer.

2. How ready should one be in these days to accuse another of not being orthodox?

3. Paul as seen by his contemporaries. See Chapter IV of The Character of Paul, by C. E. Jefferson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Was Paul a man who cared deeply for his friends? (See the salutations at the close of his Epistles.) 2. In his prayer in Ephesians 3, what did Paul ask for his friends? 3. Were Paul's prayers for material or spiritual blessings? 4. What part does prayer have in your life? 5. Do your children ever hear you pray? 6. Do you wish that prayer meant more to you? 7. What price do you think Paul paid for his power in prayer? 8. Are you willing to give more time and thought to your prayer life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL PROVES HIS COURAGE

Beginning the Lesson

"What nobler spectacle than that of Paul at this moment! There he stands bound with two chains, ready to make his defense to the people. The Roman commander sits by to enforce order by his presence. An enraged populace look up to him from below. Yet in the midst of so many dangers, how self-possessed is he, how tranquil!"

This is the way in which Chrysostom, who lived in the second century, pictures the scene with which our lesson text begins. There are many questions which we must have answered before we can understand how it is that Paul appears to be so noble and self-poised, what dangers beset him, why the populace is so enraged, and

where they were that were "below him." Who will tell us what has happened since we left Paul at Miletus?

The Riot and the Arrest

They got him—those Jews from Asia. That morning they had suddenly recognized him in the streets walking with his Gentile friend Trophimus the Ephesian, and now they see him in the temple with his four poor men and they are but too ready to suspect that he had brought in the Gentiles into the holy place. He had not done anything of the kind, but suspicious people will believe anything. Straightway the fierce hatred is flashing in their eyes and with a wild shout of rage the men of Asia are upon him. "Men of Israel, help! This is the wretch that teaches everywhere against Moses and the Law and the temple of God. Now he has brought Gentiles into the temple and polluted the holy place!"

The defilement of the temple was the unspeakable crime. Even the Roman authorities had to be most careful about that. In a moment the rumors had spread among the fanatic crowd, and in another moment they have rushed him. He is struck to the ground and flung violently down the steps through the Beautiful Gate. And straightway the gates are shut behind him, lest the temple should be desecrated by murder. The murder does not matter so much provided it is done outside. Ah, Paul, there is no mercy in that trampling mob now that they have got you down.

But his time has not yet come. The Roman police are well trained in riots, and before he well has time to commend his soul to God he hears the sharp military command and the rush of armed men who lifted him in their arms as they beat back the crowd. In spite of their quickness he is nearly torn from them, and only that line of armed men, that line of bright, flashing steel on the stairs keeps them from following into the barracks.

Behind that line of steel the chief captain, Claudius Lysias, looks at his prisoner all bruised and bleeding but calm and undaunted as he faces the crowd. Paul had been close to death too often to be much disconcerted. Calm and undaunted he turns to the Chief Captain:

"May I speak unto thee, Captain?"

"What! Can you speak Greek? I thought you were that rascal Egyptian who led the Passover riots last year whom we chased from the city with his band of assassins!"

"No, I am a Jew, a citizen of Tarsus. I beseech thee for leave to speak to the people."

Surely an unexpected request from a man whom just now they had been trampling to death. But after all they were his own people and he longed to help them. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they should be saved."

Evidently, Claudius Lysias is impressed. A brave man is quick at recognizing a brave man. He is curious too to see the result of this speech. Perhaps it might disperse the crowd for him without further bloodshed. But at any rate he will take no chances. He will keep that line of steel guarding the stairs.

Paul steps forward. His compelling personality and the sound of his words in their native tongue grips the crowd at once and "immediately there is a great silence."

"Brethren, I am a Jew like yourselves. Like you, I fiercely rejected the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah. Many of you remember how I hated his name and persecuted his followers as you do today. What changed me? I will tell you." In simple, graphic words he tells the story of his life crisis when the Christ appeared to him in glory on the Damascus road. "'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest!' In that solemn hour he commissioned me from Heaven to proclaim the Righteous One whom I had seen and heard. How could I resist him after that?"

Up to this he holds his audience spellbound. It was a fascinating story and quite new to most of them. But what more had Jesus said to him? "He said to me, 'The Jews will not receive thy testimony about me.' He said, 'Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles!'"

Then in a moment pandemonium broke loose. The Gentile to be put in the place of the Jews! They went wild with anger, "Down with the renegade! Down with the traitor! Away with such a fellow from the earth! It is not fit that he should live!"

And Claudius Lysias thought that it was just as well that he had kept that line of steel upon the stairs.

But Claudius Lysias was vexed and disappointed. For Paul, instead of quieting

the crowd had roused them into raving lunatics. Of course, he could not understand Paul's speech. What had he said? What was the trouble? "Take him in and strip him and examine him by scourging. We must get to the bottom of this, somehow."

Paul held his tongue as they bared his back and tied his hands for the torture. The rough Roman police would not understand him. But when an officer passed, he quietly asked, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen uncondemned?"

"What! A Roman citizen!"

If there was one thing more than another prominent in the police regulations, it was the respect due to a man who could utter the proud boast *"Civis Romanus sum."* Claudius Lysias is hurriedly called and with new respect for his prisoner and apprehension in his heart that he had maltreated a Roman citizen, he delivers Paul from the torture.—J. Paterson Smyth, in The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

How Paul Bore his Sufferings

Probably not the half of Paul's hardships are referred to in the New Testament, but enough of them are recorded to appall the heart. One cannot read his letters without knowing that his suffering was immense. He speaks of his tribulations with great freedom. But the recital of his hardships does not make us gloomy. When we are most depressed we turn to his letters. They cheer us up in our most doleful moods; we are helped by what he went through. It is not dismal events in the lives of others which depress us so much as the spirit in which those events are met. If the soul of the sufferer is broken down into lugubrious helplessness or wailing despair, our own heart is dragged down into the pit. But the soul which can suffer victoriously is the soul which floods the heavens with light. In his sufferings, Paul was a super-conqueror. He never moans, whines or murmurs. He never grumbles or groans. He never sobs or sighs. He has no tears for his own afflictions, only for the afflictions of others.—C. E. Jefferson, in The Character of Paul.

The Right Spirit

Said a Cardinal Legate sent to Augsburg by the Pope to discuss matters privately with Luther: "What do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend you—you, a wretched worm like you? I tell you, No! and where will you be then—where will you be then?" Calmly Luther answered: "Where I am now: in the hands of Almighty God." It has been such trust as this that has sustained God's workers in all fields.

There is No Life without its Hardships

How are we bearing ours? Courageously and nobly like Paul, fighting a good fight, having first put on the whole armor of God?

Robert Louis Stevenson was one who knew how to suffer hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He fought a long and losing fight against ill health, but he was unfailingly courageous and cheerful, and never allowed his sufferings to sadden the lives of others. Let us make our own this beautiful prayer of his:

"Go with each of us to rest; and when the day returns, call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion, and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it."

Sentence Sermons

Make no accusation which you cannot prove, and believe no accusation which is not proved to you—is as good a rule for the street corner as for the court room.—The Youth's Companion.

Brace us to play the man under difficulties.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. In what words does Paul pray that all may comprehend the extent of the love of Christ? 2. That Christ may find a home in the hearts of his people? 3. In the prayer that Christ taught us to pray, what words form the doxology? 4. What is a doxology? 5. What part of Paul's prayer in Eph. 3.14-21 is the doxology? 6. In our Lord's Prayer, how many petitions are for some material good? 7. For what do the first three petitions ask? 8. The last three? 9. Did prayer in Paul's life or Christ's life mean merely asking for things?

THE PRAYERS OF PAUL

GOLDEN TEXT: Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5.16-18

LESSON Acts 20.36-38; Romans 1.8-10; Ephesians 1.15-23; 3.14-21; 1 Thessalonians 1.2-5.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 34.1-8

ACTS 20.36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

EPHESIANS 1.15 For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which *ye show* toward all the saints, 16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers;

3.14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 unto him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL PRAYS WITH THE EPHESIAN ELDERS, Acts 20.36-38. Here we return to the scene on the shore of Miletus, our lesson three weeks ago. When Paul ended his talk to the elders who had come from Ephesus to meet him, he knelt on the shore and prayed with them. No doubt Paul was accustomed to deepen and consecrate his friendship with his co-workers by praying with them.

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God" (Tennyson).

II. PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER, Ephesians 1.15, 16. "The Epistles of Paul generally begin with thanksgiving, the subject of which is the work of God already accomplished in those to whom he writes, and this thanksgiving is followed by a prayer in which the apostle asks that the gracious work may go on in their souls. After this, he passes to the subject he proposes to treat. In the Epistle to the Ephesians he commences with thanksgiving and prayer; and, if I may so speak, he never gets beyond this, and all that he has to impart to his readers is included in the outpouring of gratitude and desire which runs through the whole of the first three chapters. All that follows from the beginning of Chapter IV is only the practical application of this true apprehension of the divine work" (F. Godet).

Hence, as I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for the saints, wrote Paul, I mention you in my prayers (Moffatt's translation). Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote these words, but the prison and its chains could not keep him from caring for his flock by bringing them in prayer to God.

"Paul in his prayers made mention of persons and groups of persons. Are our prayers as personal and specific as they ought to be? The very heathen rebuke us in this matter. On an old scrap of papyrus was written in Egypt in 172 B.C. a letter from a sister to her brother, saying, 'I continue praying to the gods for your welfare, continually making mention of you. When I got your letter, immediately I thanked the gods for your welfare.' Which of us is not rebuked by the figure of the affectionate heathen girl turning

from her letter to a grateful prayer? Perhaps the whole trouble lies in our neglect of thanksgiving" (G. A. Johnston Ross).

III. PAUL'S EARNEST PRAYER, Ephesians 3.14-19. The Jews were accustomed to stand while praying (Mt. 6.5; Lk. 18.11-13), but the Christians knelt (Acts 7.60; 9.40; 20.36). Paul writes the Ephesians that he knelt in prayer to God the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. A common religion is a great unifying force, and Paul thus reminds them of their brotherhood with all men.

"All our worship is to be addressed thus to the God who is universal Father; and in the intimacies of worship we must ever be on our guard against a selfish provincialism which would narrow the area of the interests of the God we worship" (G. A. Johnston Ross).

And then Paul asks great things of God for his friends. He prays that God may grant them out of the wealth of his glory a mighty increase of his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts as they have faith (Moffatt's translation). Paul asks God to give them in a manner worthy of his august character the inward strength which comes from the Holy Spirit and the permanent indwelling of Christ—two gifts which are one. "Just as the ethereally sensitive antennæ of the wireless apparatus put the modern man in mysterious but immediate touch with a friend far off in the trackless waters of the sea, so the faith alike of the Damascus road and of the Epistles, has that spiritual faculty which makes Christ at home in Paul's heart" (Marcus Buell). "If any man love me, my Father will love him," said Jesus; "and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

"Nothing is more familiar in Scripture than the conception of the indwelling Spirit of God as the source of moral strength. The special power that belongs to the gospel Christ ascribes altogether to this cause. 'Ye shall receive power,' he said to his disciples, 'after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.' Hence is derived the vigor of a strong faith, the valor of a good soldier of Christ Jesus, the courage of the martyrs, the cheerful and indomitable patience of multitudes of the obscure sufferers for righteousness' sake. All high and commanding qualities of soul come from this invisible source" (G. S. Findlay).

May you be so fixed and founded in love that you can grasp with all the saints what is the meaning of "the Breadth," "the Length," "the Depth" and "the Height," by knowing the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge! (Moffatt's translation).

"What is the object in view in the mention of these dimensions? It is left unnamed. Hence the many conjectures on the subject. But the context naturally suggests the *love of Christ,* that being the supreme thing and the one which is immediately set before us in express terms. The surpassing magnitude of Christ's love for us, the power to comprehend that love in its utmost conceivable grandeur and its furthest reaching relations, is what Paul prays God to grant his Ephesians" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

"As one rides through the matchless scenery of the Canadian Rockies on a railroad train, and gazes, from the car window, out upon the majestic, glistening, snow-capped peaks which tower above and far below him, and then down into the wild gorges far below, he finds himself unable to put sight into speech. The spectacle is too sublime for words. There is, however, one thing he can do. He can turn to a fellow traveler and say, 'Look! Look at that! Just look!' So as we consider God's great love; as we gaze upward towards its sublime heights, and down into the abysmal depths from which it lifts the soul; as we think of the wonder of its plan and the marvels of its grace; as we contemplate its tenderness and compassion, its sacrificial atonement and holy entreaties and glorious keeping power, we find words too shallow for such a theme. God's love is too vast to be put into words. There is, however, one thing we can do. We can turn to our fellow travelers along the road and say, 'Look! Just look! For his great love wherewith he loved us!'" (James I. Vance).

The things that may be accomplished in and through us are the great things for which we should pray. "Prayer is the opening of the sluiceways of our spiritual life in order that God may pour abundant life through them so that our own lives shall be enriched and the lives of others abundantly blessed."

To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God. "The idea conveyed is of an object that invites our observation and pursuit, but which at every step outreaches apprehension, each discovery revealing depths within it unperceived before. Such was the knowledge of Christ to the soul of Paul. To the Philippians the aged apostle writes: 'I do not reckon myself to have apprehended him. I am in pursuit! I forget the past; I press on eagerly to the goal. I have but one object in view and sacrifice everything for it—that I may win Christ'!"

IV. PAUL'S DOXOLOGY, 3.20, 21. Now to him who by the action of his power within us can do all things, aye, far more than we ever ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations for ever and ever: Amen (Moffatt's translation). The literal translation of the last words is *unto all the generations of the age of the ages,* "one of those reduplicated, cumulative expressions by which the mind of man working with the ideas of time labors to convey the idea of the eternal."

"That they might be strengthened in the inner man so as to have Christ's living and abiding presence in them, and be lifted thereby to the comprehension of his love and the personal knowledge of that which yet surpasses all knowledge, and at last to be filled with all spiritual excellence even up to the measure of the complete perfection that is in God himself—this is the sweep of what Paul in his prayer desires for these Ephesians so late sunk in heathen hopelessness and godlessness" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

The Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, Eph. 3.15. The Greek word for family (*patria*) is based on that for father (*pater*). A distinguished father anciently gave his name to his descendants; and this paternal name became the bond of family or tribal union, and the title which ennobled the race. So we have the "sons of Israel," the "sons of Aaron," or "of Korah." Thus Joseph (in Lk. 2.4) is described as "being of the house and family of David," and Jesus is "the Son of David."—G. G. Findlay.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Where was Paul when he knelt on the shore and prayed, and who were with him? Where was Paul going? What was Jesus' habit of prayer? What text from Ephesians did we have in an earlier lesson?

The Epistle to the Ephesians

See our Introduction.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

The Bishop of Durham refers to a devoted Sunday-school teacher who was "the means, under God, of bringing scholar after scholar, with always growing frequency, to the feet of Jesus in loving conversion, evidenced by a new life of love and consistency. After her death her diary was found to contain, among other entries, the three following: 'Resolved, to pray for each scholar by name.' 'Resolved, to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name.' 'Resolved, to wrestle for each by name and to expect an answer.'"

"Now abideth speech, example, prayer; but the greatest of these is prayer" (St. Bernard).

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN PAUL'S LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

We are accustomed to think of Paul as a man of action, of strenuous endeavor. We hear of his early activity against the little struggling Christian Church in Jerusalem, and after his conversion, we see him just as active in its support. We read of his missionary journeys, his hardships, his unwearied efforts to spread the gospel, and we call him primarily a worker. But behind all this, the constant source of his power was his life of communion with God in prayer. We have three references to his prayer life in our text today. What are they?

The Prayer of Paul

Father, to Thee we bow;
Father of Christ art Thou,
Father of all.
In Thee we live and move:
Thy family of love
Is one—below, above;
Thou, All in all.

Thy rich and glorious grace
Gird all our struggling days
With holy power;
That so Thy Spirit's might,
Filling our souls with light,
May lift to cloudless height
Each o'ercast hour.

In us may faith enshrine
Thy Christ—his cross our sign,
His love our root;
That power to apprehend
The love which knows no end
From strength to strength may tend
With holy fruit.

We with all saints would know
The utmost Thou wouldst show
In Christ our Lord:
All lower longings stilled,
From him would we be filled
Full as Thy grace hath willed,
Fullness of God.

To Thee, who more canst bless
Than prayers or thoughts express
With powers divine,
Thy Church in Christ doth raise
Her filial hymn of praise:
Through everlasting days
All glory Thine.

—J. M. W.

As Paul Prayed for Others, so he Craved their Prayers for Himself

He regarded prayer as a great co-operative relationship (2 Cor. 1.11). Those to whom gifts had been given could best repay through prayer (2 Cor. 9.12-15). In the direction and planning of his own life, he counted upon the prayers of his friends as a determining factor (Phil. 1.19, 20). His constant appeal was, "Pray for me" (1 Thess. 5.25). He asked the Romans to pray for four things for him (Rom. 15.30-32), the Ephesians to ask for bold utterance for him (Eph. 6.18-20), the Colossians for an open door (Col. 4.2-4), and more than once he entreated prayers for deliverance (2 Thess. 3.1, 2; Phil. 22). "Whole days and weeks," says Whitefield, "have I spent prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer." He could not have prayed more unweariedly than Paul. "For God is my witness," he writes, "whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you" (Rom. 1.9, 10). Again and again he writes of his unceasing prayers (1 Cor. 1.4; Eph. 1.15, 16; Phil. 1.3-5; Col. 1.3, 9), and in writing to the Thessalonians, while he exhorted them to pray without ceasing, he assures them that it is without ceasing that he prays for them (1 Thess. 1.2, 3; 2.13; 2 Thess. 1.3, 11, 12; 2.13-15).—Robert E. Speer, in Paul the Man of Prayer.

For What Paul Prayed

Paul was one of those men whom Fleming Stevenson described "who maintain that God exercises some direct influence in the affairs of the world; who therefore appeal to him in any puzzle or difficulty; who expect his help, and as they believe that he has the hearts of all men in his hand, do not know any special type of actions within which that help must be limited. They distinctly believe in God as their Father, and never care to realize him either as a pure, infinite intelligence, or as an eternal law. They believe, also, that prayer is not an arbitrary provision for temporary circumstances, but that it is fixed in the ways of God, and in harmony with the settled relations of the world and the laws of human conduct. And they believe that if in God's name they begin a fitting work, God will establish it, answer their prayers regarding it, enable them to deal wisely and righteously and prosperously by it, and that behind every other means, and often supplanting the others, there is prayer itself." —Robert E. Speer, in Paul the Man of Prayer.

Paul Studied his Prayers

We have several great passages which show what his oral prayers must have been (Eph. 1.15-23; 3.14.21; Col. 1.9-23). It is clear from these passages that the apostle studied the thought of his prayers. The character of his written prayers would indicate that his public prayers were not loose and slovenly. "When someone complimented M. Thiers on his effective impromptu speech in the French Assembly," Dr. H. Clay Trum-

bull says in one of his two books on prayer, "M. Thiers replied that he never insulted the Assembly with impromptu speeches, but he rose at five o'clock every morning to prepare his 'impromptu' for the day." "Study your prayers," said Robert Murray McCheyne; "a great part of my time is occupied in getting my heart into tune for prayer."—Robert E. Speer, in Paul the Man of Prayer.

Paul Persevered in Prayer

There are streams that may be rushing torrents for a while in the rainy season, but in the summer are dried up and gone. Such is not true prayer. True prayer, like a river flowing from distant springs and growing with the increase of tributary streams, moves ever onward and pours itself into the sea at last.—James Silvester.

Paul's Prayers Included Thanksgiving

A British paper, commenting upon President Coolidge's last Thanksgiving Proclamation, makes this observation: "Our own country occasionally sets apart a special Day of Thanksgiving to mark some outstanding event; but we know nothing of an annual act of homage and supplication to the Lord whose daily care, for individuals and peoples alike, is the primal fact of existence. Is it well for us as a nation to seem to forget the overruling providence of Almighty God, until such time as an unusual visitation throws us back upon 'some Power which is not ourselves'?"

Next Thursday is Thanksgiving Day

Let us observe it as a day of special thanksgiving to God for the blessings we as a nation enjoy and the opportunities we as a nation have for service in the world. Let us also give thanks to God daily, as did Paul; thanks for our friends, and for other blessings, and thanks even for the trials that test us and in the overcoming strengthen our characters.

Our Thanksgiving

For unkind words repressed,
For ill intent not done,
For evil thoughts suppressed,
Unworthy goals unwon:
Accept, O Lord, we pray
Our fervent thanks today.

For faults of yesteryear
Repaired by aid of thine;
For penalties we fear
Withheld by love divine:
Accept, O Lord, we pray
Our hearty thanks today.

For mercy patient still
With us so slow to mend;
For heaven's kindly will
That daily good doth send:
Accept, O Lord, we pray
Our humble thanks today.

For one more day to live
And one more chance to love;
For will to work and give,
And thus our manhood prove:
Accept, O Lord, we pray
Our hopeful thanks today.

—Arthur Burd McCormick.

Paul Knew how to Pray

Compare praying like this (in Ephesians 3.14-19) with the spasmodic cry of occasional need, and see how great the difference is. Here prayer has risen into an elevated demand on life, unselfish and constant. It gathers up the powers of the soul in a constraining desire for God's blessing on the one who prays and on all men. What starts in the pagan as an unregulated and fitful impulse has become in Paul an intelligent, persevering, and well-directed habit.—Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Methods of Prayer

Regularity is most important. If your acts of prayer are the most regular things in your life, I think you will find they regulate all else. It is the regular use of prayer which leads to spontaneity. Let your first morning thought be of God, and let it be a thought of praise. Turn your mind to him, away from yourself, and make it an act of pure adoration. And mark the evening time of prayer by an act of committal. You know you can dictate your first waking disposition by your last thought at night. But the chief time of morning and evening prayer should be a little later than the first moment when you get out of bed, and certainly a little earlier than that last moment when you only want to get into it. Then the morning and evening are too far apart for any soul that wants to draw very near to God, therefore it is a good thing to take a short time for prayer in the middle of the day. In addition to these three times, make acts of recollection as often during the day as you can. By an act of recollection I mean simply a sudden memory of God, lifting the soul to him, and perhaps registering it by some acts of praise.

Your prayer should also include a short prelude and a short postlude of silence. Have a moment of silence before you begin, and do not jump up from your knees; wait and be silent. It is only reverent, and has something more than reverence in it.

It is a good thing to have some spoken prayer—I mean spoken out loud. It is a very good thing so to accustom your voice to speak aloud that it influences your speaking all day. Do not despise devout uses; they have a greater psychological commonsense behind them than this generation of ours knows anything about.—Condensed from a sermon by W. E. Orchard.

The Listening Period

One day not long ago I was in the room of an Oregon lad who had rigged up a radio receiving equipment. Tacked upon the wall above the apparatus was a printed radio schedule, sent out from Portland, in which every hour of the day seemed programmed. No, not every hour, for on running my eye down the schedule I found one hour marked, "Listening Period." "What does that mean?" I asked my boy friend. He explained that it was a period in which the various broadcasting stations of the State and Northwest were silent that the receiving instruments in their field might listen undisturbed to messages from afar.

The listening period! How many of us make a place for it in our crowded daily programs? So busily broadcasting are we, each ferverishly anxious to send to others our own thoughts and opinions, our own plans and projects, that we hardly so much as pause for mental replenishment or for spiritual refreshment. And perchance if we do pause briefly it is but to listen to the distracting voices and sounds about us. It is the Voice from afar, yet closer than hand or touch, that would speak to our condition if we would but listen. Oh, if the peoples and nations of the earth would but settle quietly into a listening period and "know that I am God"!—Editorial in The American Friend.

The Place Prayer May Have in Every One's Life

A life that, ever calm and glad,
One melody and message had.
"How keeps it so," men asked, "when I
Must change with every changing sky?"

Ah! if men knew the secret power
That gladdens every day and hour,
Would they not change to song life's care,
By drinking at the fount of prayer?

—James Buckham.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Paul the man of prayer. See Chapter IX of Paul the All-Round Man, by Robert E. Speer.

2. Why pray? The defective prayer life in our churches. In our homes.

3. Is our church suffering from abnormal activities and subnormal spiritual life?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What has happened since Paul's arrest in Jerusalem? 2. Why did Paul appeal to Cæsar? 3. How would you characterize Felix? 4. What impression did Paul make upon Festus? 5. Upon Agrippa? 6. Give Paul's entire address before Agrippa. 7. In what way did Paul show his courtesy? 8. What do you think of his answer to Agrippa?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL AS A MAN OF PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson

The men that "talk-up" is the name which the Choctaw Indians gave the missionaries who first visited them. Would that not be a beautiful name for every Christian—one who talks up to God, one who prays? Paul was a man who talked up, he was always a man of prayer. Who will picture that scene on the shore of Miletus when Paul bade farewell to his friends from Ephesus?

What do we call the letter which Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus? We have two selections from that letter in our lesson text. In the first selection, what does Paul tell his friends? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Paul Practised Prayer

The spirit deserves as much care as the body. Is not our spiritual health as important to our well-being as our physical health? Is not the life more than food, and the body more than the raiment? Is not the kernel within the seed and the sap within the oak—in other words that which is within, vitalizing, propelling the life processes—more important than that which is without and can be seen and touched?

Let us take as our model the zeal and steadfastness of the physical culturist and utilize it in the field of the spirit. To associate these two fields in our mind will prove very helpful for our present purpose, for a prayer should be for the spirit exactly what calisthenics should be for the body—something to keep one in tune, fit, vital, efficient and constantly ready for the next problem of life.

The value of Walter Camp's Daily Dozen is that, after the fifteen minutes' exercise in the morning, you find you are breathing a little deeper all day. We should expect the same results from our fifteen minutes of prayer every morning. We should be living in the Kingdom of God a little more vitally all day.—Condensed from an Article in The Atlantic, by Glenn Frank.

Paul's Prayers Were Sincere

I often say my prayers
But do I ever pray,
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone
As offer to the Living God
A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear,
Nor will he to those lips attend
Whose prayers are not sincere.—John Burton.

The Prayer that is always Answered

Just think what you would be if you dared to be your best. At home, at school, at work, at play, with your parents, your employers, your friends; always your "best." Why, you can hardly recognize yourselves! Ever had your photograph taken? If so, you perhaps know that there is a process known as "touching up the negative." The result of this process is that when your friends see the finished photograph, they look at it and then at you, and say, "I say, old chap, I really didn't know you were so awfully good looking." It is not very complimentary, but it is true. If you think what you would be like if you were ever trying to be your best, you will probably have to say the same thing to yourself. Why should you not make the actual as much like the possible as can be?

Here is something that I fancy will surprise you. The very effort to be our "best" is in itself a prayer. Further, it is the prayer that God always answers. Why? Because it is so real. It is not only "from the lips"; it is "of the life." That is to say, you do not simply say, "Please, God, make me good"; you go much further and say, "Please, God, I'm trying hard, and I am seeking and expecting thy Help."—Fathers to Men.

Prayer in the Life of a Boy

One Sunday-school teacher with a group of boys ranging in age from fifteen to eighteen years asked them regarding the value they placed upon prayer. Without exception everyone frankly stated that he had tried it and it was no good. One fellow remarked that he had tried praying and going without praying, and he did not see that it made a particle of difference. Like many others, they continued to pray because they thought they ought to, because they had been taught to, but it was a dreary, unsatisfactory exercise. As these fellows were old enough to do some serious thinking, the teacher asked some questions.

Suppose you were God, and one man just down the road here in the village prayed for fine weather next Tuesday because he wanted to go on a picnic, and his next door neighbor prayed for rain because his crops needed it. What would you do in a case of that kind? They frankly decided that the man who needed the rain for his crops ought to have any preference there might be. Then the second question followed:

But suppose you were the fellow who prayed just as earnestly, and your prayer did not work. Would you not be likely to lose faith in God and in prayer? They admitted that they would, but, on the other hand, they also called attention to the fact that this particular man did not understand the entire situation or he would not have prayed as he did. Then the next question was something after this order:

Does prayer consist of getting down on one's knees and teasing God to change his mind on any particular subject? Does God's mind need to be changed? Is he not already eager to do the very best thing that can possibly be done under the circumstances? Don't we really need to have our minds changed, rather than to try to change his? If we could see things as he sees them, would we not want exactly the same thing that he wants? Should not prayer, in part at least, be an effort on our part to appreciate his side of the question, whatever it may be?

The boys were honest in discussing this matter, as boys usually are. They began to see some sense in different kinds of prayer: prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving; prayers of intercession for the other fellow; prayers for themselves. They began to see that kneeling at the close of the day alone in the presence of God, and with him reviewing the victories or defeats, the successes or failures of the day, with him trying to discover the points where the mistake was made, and so on, was really worth while. They began to think of the morning prayer, and how, as they looked at the work or play ahead of them, they should plan in accordance with his plans so that they might come to the evening prayer with more satisfaction than the day before. They saw a new meaning in the text, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," and agreed that if they could only keep their thoughts on every subject of work or play in line with God's thoughts on the same subject it was the best thing they could possibly do, and that such an effort in itself was one kind of prayer.

A new light came to them also when they realized that the words, "For Jesus' sake," so often repeated at the close of the prayer, were not intended to be used as a magic talisman to produce results, but that, unless the entire prayer was really for the sake of Jesus, and the extension of his Kingdom, rather than for some petty, selfish thing, it could not be expected to carry much weight.—Edgar M. Robinson, in The Sunday School Journal.

The Power of Prayer for Others

In a sermon preached in England, Mr. A. L. Kemp related this effect of the prayer of a little child for a cab-driver friend. One day the man crept quietly up the stairs to his little friend's room and heard these words as he neared the door: "Oh, Father, do not let him be drunken any more; he is so good and kind and I love him." The man knelt at the bedside on his knees and said to the lad through his tears, "Were you praying for a waif like me?" "Yes," said the boy, "I always do that. You're no waif, you're a man." And the man never forgot that night and that prayer; in the crowded streets, piloting his cab through the city, the words, winged with love, rang in his ears like joy bells, "You're no waif; you're a man," till the refrain made him stand true, borne into manhood through a child's simple prayer.

Sentence Sermons

We are coming to a King;
Large petitions with us bring.—Ancient Hymn.

In everything give thanks.—Paul.

Prayer is intimacy with God.—W. J. Dawson.

The aim of prayer is to bring the mind, the heart, the life, near to God.—W. E. Orchard.

The most Christlike prayer is prayer for others.—Alexander MacColl.

Prayer is the key of the day and the lock of the night.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. What happened between Paul's arrest and his appearance before Felix and Drusilla? 2. Read the verses of the lesson which are omitted from the printed text. 3. Who was Festus? 4. What qualities are shown by Paul in these trials? 5. By Felix? 6. By Festus? 7. By Agrippa?

PAUL BEFORE HIS JUDGES

GOLDEN TEXT: I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26.19

LESSON Acts 24.1-26.32

ACTS 24.24 But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. 26 He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

26.19 Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. 21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; 23 how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. 25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. 29 And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 25.1-6

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND DRUSILLA, 24.24-26. Some days later (see The Historical Background), Felix sent for Paul that he and Drusilla might hear him in regard to his faith in Jesus Christ. Drusilla was a Jewess, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (whose death is narrated in Acts 12.20-23).

Paul talked about matters pertinent to the conduct of Felix; righteousness—"Felix supposed he might perpetrate with impunity any kind of villainy," said Tactitus—self-control—Felix had induced Drusilla to leave her husband and live with him; and the judgment to come—Felix had murdered Jonathan, the high priest, and had committed many other sins. Paul talked so effectively that Felix trembled. Compare John the Baptist's talk with Herod, Mk. 6.14-20.

"Fear is not faith, but it may lead to faith, or it may lead to hardening" (Alexander Maclaren).

Although Felix trembled, his only answer to Paul was, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season I will call thee unto me." "Felix doesn't think that he is deciding the question that Paul has raised. He thinks that he has postponed the decision, but he hasn't. For indecisive procrastination is one of the most conclusive methods of decision that mankind knows. Life's processes do not call a halt simply because we have not made up our minds. If you have a garden-plot you may suppose that you have three choices: either to have flowers, or to have weeds, or to be hesitant, uncertain, undecisive. But in fact you have only two choices. If you choose flowers, you may have them; but if you decide to be indecisive, nature will decide for you—you will have weeds. The processes of God's eternal universe do not stop to wait for us to make up our minds. To make flowers grow means positive decision. And to become a Christian requires positive decision. You must make up your mind to it. And if any Felix endeavors to be indecisive, he is not really indecisive. His life processes still go on without Christ because he has not positively decided for Christ" (H. E. Fosdick).

One-fourth of the human race dies before reaching the seventh year, one-half before the seventeenth year. Out of one hundred persons only six live to be sixty years old. Out of five hundred only one lives to be eighty years

old. If you are seventeen years old, you have already had a longer life than half of those who were born the same year as you. If you are sixty, your life has been spared longer than that of every ninety-four persons out of a hundred born the year that you were. Is it safe to put off deciding the greatest of all questions till a more convenient season?

"Although Felix often sent for Paul after this, it was only with the hope that Paul would give him a bribe for his freedom. 'Though he heard again,' says Wesley, 'he was terrified no more.' He had yielded to motives which prevented the deep impression being repeated" (James Moffatt).

"Do not be blind to this truth—that if you have no higher motive than your own personal interest, it means that your soul is for sale if the price be made sufficiently high" (H. E. Hadley).

II. PAUL LEFT IN PRISON, 24.27. Two years passed. Felix was a poor administrator, and such serious disturbances took place in the streets of Cæsarea between Jews and Gentiles that the troops were called out and blood was shed. Felix was summoned to Rome to answer for the situation in his province. He hoped to gain the favor of the Jews by leaving Paul in bonds. He well knew that justice demanded Paul's release, but what cared he for justice as long as there might be a chance of placating the Jews by an act of injustice? But the Jews followed Felix to Rome with their accusations and Nero, the reigning Cæsar, deposed him and appointed Festus ruler over Judea.

III. FESTUS GIVES PAUL A HEARING, 25.1-12. As soon as Festus came to Jerusalem the chief priests and leading Jews asked him as a favor to have Paul sent down to Jerusalem to be judged by them, purposing to kill him on the way. Festus, however, said that he was going shortly to Cæsarea, and they could come there and make their charges. Within a few days Festus reached Cæsarea and arranged Paul's trial. The Jews from Jerusalem made their charges which they did not prove. Paul declared, as he had before Felix, that not against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar had he offended. For the sake of gaining the favor of the Jews, Festus asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be judged there before him. Paul knew full well what judgment he would receive in that event, and boldly declared that he appealed to Cæsar. After hastily conferring with the council, Festus made the only reply he could make in this emergency, "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

IV. FESTUS TELLS KING AGRIPPA OF PAUL'S CASE, 25.13-27. Before Paul could be sent to Rome, Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to greet the new governor of Judea. Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II, ruler of some principalities in northern Palestine with the title of king. He was a son of Herod Agrippa I who slew James the son of Zebedee; a great nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; a great grandson of Herod the Great, who massacred the innocents in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus. Festus reported Paul's case to Agrippa and the latter expressed a desire to hear Paul. The next day Paul was summoned before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, and the chief men of the city. Festus declared before them all that he had not found Paul worthy of death, but he wished Agrippa to examine Paul in order that he, Festus, might learn what charges to make against him in his letter to the emperor. Agrippa told Paul to speak for himself, and Paul then made his famous defense.

V. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA, 26.1-23. The twenty-sixth chapter of The Acts is one of the twenty-six chapters of the Bible which Ruskin's mother had him commit to memory; whereby, as Ruskin says, she established his soul in righteousness. It is well worth being learned by heart, for it contains the finest address in The Acts, the best account we have of Paul's relation to his mission, and in its dignity, sincerity, skill and persuasiveness proves the power of the gospel to "turn from darkness to light." It is called Paul's *apologia pro vita sua,* his defense for his life, but the apostle is not pleading in fear for his life; he shows, indeed, that he is not a criminal, that he has done nothing worthy of death, but he does so in defending Christianity as being, not contrary to earlier divine revelation but a fulfilment of that revelation, a culmination of all past promises.

Paul began his defense not only of himself but of the gospel, by courteously referring to Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish questions and customs. Then he told of his life as a Pharisee, his persecution of the Christians, his vision on the way to

Damascus, and his commission to preach to the Gentiles. "Whereupon, O King Agrippa," Paul exclaimed, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

"Remember that the heavenly vision comes to you in very humble and every-day forms, not in visits of angels or light flashing down from the skies. It comes in the simple guise of duty; the thing which you ought to do today, and which you know that you ought to do. That is the heavenly vision of the moment. You are to give up that sin, you are to undertake that bit of work for others, you are to break from certain habits and companionships. That is what God says to you at the moment. You are sure of it. It is the vision which you have to follow—follow it!" (J. G. Greenhough).

He had faithfully carried out the command received on the way to Damascus, Paul continued, by preaching at Damascus, at Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and to the Gentiles that all must repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance. Because of his preaching the Jews had seized him in the temple and tried to kill him. But God had helped him, and he had continued to testify to all what the prophets and Moses had foretold—a suffering and a risen Christ, the light unto all the world, Jews and Gentiles alike.

VI. FESTUS CALLS PAUL MAD, 26.24-26. Much of what Paul said was unintelligible to Festus, but when he heard Paul declare that the One whom the Romans had crucified had arisen from the dead and was become a light to all, he could not keep silence. With a loud voice he cried, "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad."

Early in Christ's ministry his friends went out to lay hold on him, for, they said, "He is beside himself." And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casteth he out demons." After he had given sight to the blind man many of the Jews said, "He hath a demon, and is mad, why hear ye him?" And common it is in these days for men to declare one crazy whom they do not understand, or whose opinions differ from theirs.

VII. PAUL'S APPEAL TO AGRIPPA, 26.27-29. Courteously Paul replied to Festus that he was speaking words of truth and soberness, and then he turned to Agrippa and appealed to him as one who had knowledge of these things that had been notorious (not done in a corner), and said: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." "He had been showing Agrippa there was expectation in the Hebrew economy, and continuation and completion in the ministry of Jesus; and he now said in effect: Agrippa, you know the story of Jesus, you believe the prophets; put them together, find the logical conclusion, in order to come to volitional abandonment" (G. Campbell Morgan).

Disdainfully Agrippa answered him: "Thou thinkest with a little persuasion to make me a Christian!" We can almost see the smile on the faces of those who listened to Agrippa's scornful jest.

"Agrippa had a general notion of what Paul believed as a Christian. And was he any better for it? No! He was a great deal worse. It took the edge off a good deal of his curiosity. It made him fancy that he knew beforehand all that the apostle had to say. It stood in the way of his apprehending the truth which he vainly thought that he understood.

"And although the world knows a great deal more about Jesus Christ and the gospel than he did, the very same thing is true of hundreds and thousands of people who have all their lives been brought into contact with Christianity. Superficial knowledge is the worst enemy of accurate knowledge" (Alexander Maclaren).

Very courteous and noble was Paul's rejoinder that he wished that not only Agrippa but all present, whether through much or little persuasion, might become a Christian like himself—his chains excepted. Agrippa's worldly position with all its pomp and splendor was as naught compared with Paul's spiritual knowledge and perfect trust. "The saying, in its very tenderness, expresses the utmost contempt for all that these men enjoyed and were living for. Life meant for these men sensual pleasures, pompous shows, command of money, power and ambition—cups most of which Paul had tasted. He knew the measure of satisfaction they would yield. And he had stepped up from this to a higher platform, to a life in which vulgar ambitions

were forgotten, and the pleasures of the senses were pushed out by mightier joys; to a life in which enthusiasm, hope, love, great aims, the friendship of God and fellowship with Christ, were supreme. Standing there, with the chains upon his wrists, despised or pitied by all the spectators, he felt a joyous liberty, a serene calm, a fulness of unutterable emotion, a lofty grandeur of soul, such as he knew that they had never felt and known. He was quite sure that life meant more and deeper and nobler things to him than had ever entered their hearts to conceive" (J. C. Greenhough).

"Happy is the preacher who is not afraid of the hearer turning from the message to the messenger! I looked at a florist's shop the other day and I saw a great many packets of seeds. In the middle of the window there was an exquisitely beautiful plant in flower, and attached to it were three words, 'Grown from our seed.' I say thrice blessed is the minister of God who, when he has been commending the seed of the Word, can point to an evident experience as confirmation of its power and grace. And thrice miserable are those servants of God whose speech is utterly belied by their life" (J. H. Jowett).

Thus ended the session. The king and the governor and the rest withdrew, and after acknowledging that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment, Agrippa told Festus that he could not free Paul because Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and that appeal had taken the case out of their hands.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

He hoped that money would be given him of Paul, 24.26. To take bribes was in direct violation of the Roman law, but was in perfect accordance with the character of this unjust and avaricious judge. The Julian law, de Repetundis, expressly prohibited a judge from receiving anything for a person's imprisonment or liberation. Nor was Felix the only instance of a governor of Judea who was guilty of taking bribes. Albinus, one of his successors, on his departure from the province, freed all those prisoners who gave him money; "by which means," as Josephus remarks, "the prisons were indeed emptied, but the country was filled with robbers." (Paton J. Gloag, in Commentary on The Acts.)

Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad, 26.24. "In the ancient world madness was closely associated with inspiration; a madman was supposed to be possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with awe. Festus must have had some such feeling. The mention of Moses and the prophets suggested to him that through excessive study of Jewish lore the apostle had become possessed of a religious frenzy.

Nero, the Cæsar to Whom Paul Appealed

If he had not appealed unto Cæsar, 26.32. Though Jews had appealed against Roman officials, this was the first time a Jew had appealed to the highest court of the realm against other Jews. The words *Cæsarem appello,* I appeal to Cæsar, stopped all proceedings in a provincial court. Unless the prisoner had been proved guilty of brigandage or sedition, the provincial governor had no choice in the matter, the prisoner must be sent on to Rome for trial. Meanwhile he must be well treated, as if uncondemned. Professor Ramsay points out that there has always been one law for the rich man and another for the poor in the sense that many claims can be successfully pushed by a rich man in which a poor man would have no chance of success, and his opinion is that the citizen's right of appeal to the Emperor was hedged in by fees and pledges, so that Paul was choosing an expensive line of trial.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

When and by whom was Jesus accused of being mad? What was the vision to which Paul was not disobedient?

Paul before the Sanhedrin

Two weeks ago we saw Paul saved from death at the hands of a mob of Jews by the intervention of Roman soldiers under Lysias, the chief captain. On the morrow Lysias summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought Paul before them. There so stormy a scene took place that Lysias, fearing for the life of his prisoner, ordered him taken back to his castle. Soon afterwards Paul was hurried off to a prison in Cæsarea to avoid his being killed by assassins. Read the whole story in Acts 23.

Taken to Cæsarea

The soldiers under whose guard Paul had traveled took their prisoner at once to the procurator's court. Felix, the procurator, read the letter which they gave him from Lysias, a cleverly constructed letter declaring that the prisoner had been rescued, because a Roman, from rioters in the temple, and informing the governor about the trial before the Sanhedrin where Paul had been found guilty of nothing worthy of bonds or death, and stating that he, Lysias, had directed the accusers to appear before Felix. Felix told Paul that he would hear his case when his accusers arrived, and ordered him kept in Herod's palace.

Before Felix: the Case against Paul Stated by Tertullus

Lysias had ordered Paul's accusers in Jerusalem to prefer their charge against him before Felix, and this they promptly did: the high priest Ananias with a deputation from the Sanhedrin came to Cæsarea within five days. Paul was summoned for trial, and Tertullus, the advocate whom the Jews had engaged, presented their case against Paul, accusing him of three things: inciting disturbances among the Jews throughout the Roman Empire—an offense against the Roman law; being the leader of the sect of the Nazarenes—an offense against the law of Moses; and defiling the temple—an offense against both the law of Moses and the Roman law, since the latter protected the Jews in their worship. When Tertullus finished, the deputation of Jews emphatically endorsed all that he had said.

Before Felix: Paul's Defense

Felix then made a gesture signifying that Paul should make his defense, and Paul with calm dignity answered the charges. He began in a respectful manner, saying that he spoke with greater confidence because Felix was well acquainted with the state of affairs in his nation. That he was a disturber of the public peace he denied; it had been but twelve days since he came to Jerusalem for the very opposite purpose of worshiping there, investigation could be made and no proof of his enemies' charge could be found. That he belonged to the so-called sect of the Nazarenes he acknowledged, but he was not an apostate from the Jewish religion, for he served the same God, believed the law and the prophets, and believed in the resurrection of the just and unjust as did these Jews before him, and because of this belief he strove to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. The charge of defiling the temple he denied; his purpose in going to Jerusalem had been to bring alms to his nation and offerings, and his enemies had found him carrying out a Jewish rite in the temple, with no crowd nor tumult, but there were certain Jews from Asia —enemies who ought to be here to make accusation if they found aught against him. Or let these men who are present say of what wrong-doing he was found guilty in the trial before the Council. It was because he had affirmed the resurrection of the dead that he was arraigned this day before the governor.

The Trial Adjourned

Felix, having for a Roman a good knowledge of Christianity, saw that Paul was hated because he was a Christian, but Felix would not pronounce him innocent. He adjourned the trial, his pretext for not settling the matter being that he would await the coming of Lysias. He ordered the centurion to keep Paul a prisoner, but to grant him the privilege of seeing his friends and having them minister unto him.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Cæsarea is on the Mediterranean coast, approximately half-way between Jaffa (Joppa), the port of Jerusalem, and Haifa. Herod the Great spent twelve years in building the city and constructing a breakwater to make a harbor. It was the Roman capital of Judea.

Paul's trial was held in the Prætorium, and there Paul was probably imprisoned.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

"Not disobedient unto the heavenly vision": in these few words are expressed a great pedagogical truth, that what has been learned must be put into practise. "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only." These lessons about the great apostle should leave in the minds of our pupils not only a great admiration for the man, for what he was and for what he accomplished, but should arouse in them the determination to make their lives count like his for all that they possibly can. And the way to make their lives count is to begin here and now, on Sunday and throughout this week, to put into practise the truths which they have learned from the study of the life and words of Paul, the greatest of the apostles.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL DEFENDS HIS LIFE WORK

Beginning the Lesson

In 51 or later, the date is uncertain, Antonius Felix was appointed procurator of Judea. He had been born and brought up as the slave of Antonia, the mother of Claudius Cæsar, and is therefore called Antonius Felix; because he received his freedom from Claudius, he is sometimes called Claudius Felix.

Felix "exercised the authority of a king with the spirit of a slave," says Tacitus in his history; and in his Annals Tacitus represents him as indulging in all kinds of cruelty and lawlessness. This is the man before whom Paul is now on trial. How did this come about? (See The Historical Background and Explanations.)

What the Two Years' Imprisonment Did for Paul

"What was the apostle doing all that time?" questions Dr. G. H. Morrison. "We cannot be certain that he wrote any epistles. Do you think he was fretting? Or mourning over his churches as he paced his prison? We may be absolutely certain he was doing nothing like that—he was growing and ripening in his own inward life. For twenty years he had been fighting, amid the excitement and stress of a glorious campaign. New views of Christ had been borne upon his heart; new aspects of the gospel had arrested him. He wanted leisure now to focus everything, and God bestowed that leisure at Cæsarea. Compare the letters that were written after these years with the letters which were written before them. Note the richness and depth and glory of the later ones, their exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; their fresh insistence upon spiritual union, their recognition of the possibilities of sainthood; their method of bringing the most majestic doctrines to bear on the common duties of every day—and you will see what these years did for Paul."

The Power of Paul's Address before Agrippa

The first impression which his words make upon us has to do with the power of his own personality. You feel that he secured the entire attention of every hearer from his very first word. The man was burning with a great enthusiasm. He was possessed by a great passion, and cold and unkindled as were the lives of his hearers, they felt at once the alluring warmth and glow of the life of the man who stood before them in chains. His free spirit mastered their free bodies in the very hour when he stood in their presence a prisoner.

The second thing which impresses us about Paul's speech is its moral power. After describing his astounding experience in words quick with dramatic quality and tense with feeling, he cries out, "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Suddenly all that is strange vanishes and something very familiar appears. You have here the challenging summons of duty, a man's facing of the demand while destiny waits, and then his response to the demand. Every hearer felt a thrill at Paul's words. Here was a man who took his highest ideals seriously. Here was a man who put his noblest purpose in command of his life. Here was a man who obeyed the divine behests with complete and persistent loyalty. Agrippa might feel some bewilderment about the mighty voice which had spoken on the way to Damascus, but he had no doubt about the voice which had spoken to his own soul. In some dim but real personal way he had had an equivalent of Paul's sense of divine compulsion. Every man has some sort of heavenly vision. What had Agrippa done with his? Had he obeyed it? Had he turned from it? Had he evaded it? The curious quality of moral power in Paul's speech lay in this. He made every person who listened think of the deepest moral

summons he had ever felt, and a flush of shame rose unbidden to his cheek if he had failed to meet the demand. Paul had responded to life's supreme call. The air was electric with that consciousness, and in that hour every man had a sudden flash of moral self-revelation. Paul's words were like the touch of Ithuriel's spear.

The third thing which impresses you about Paul's address is its spiritual power. You know that God is a reality to this man, and he makes him a reality to you. The light which never shone on sea or land suddenly glowed in that audience chamber while Paul spoke. Festus tried to thrust aside the sudden, vivid impression by calling Paul a learned mad man. Agrippa tried to evade the poignant something which gripped his soul by a gracious compliment, in which he suggested that with a little more speech such a wonderful rhetorician would make him a Christian. Each man had had his flash of illumination, however, and there would be dark midnight hours when they would wake to the sound of the voice of the slight, intense Jewish prisoner, and would see in the blackness a face glowing with the power of a great purpose and radiant with the sense of the presence of God.

Our lesson today is really a study in the eloquence which character gives. It is a study in the oratory which can come only from personal experience. What Paul had experienced turned his words into weapons. The life God had given to him made his words living. The climax of the lesson is found in the stimulus it gives to such an openness to God's work in us that he may speak through us.—Condensed from an article by Lynn H. Hough, in the Christian Advocate.

I Was not Disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision

The whole science of salvation lies in that sentence. For, think of it, how easy to have been disobedient! What was there in all that happened to Paul that day upon the Damascus road that might not have been explained away by a little ratiocination? A voice, a shock, a flash of blinding light—call it sunstroke, earthquake, epilepsy—a subtle mind could find many names for it. But subtle as the mind of Paul was, here was something which he well knew lay outside the mind. No force of argument or casuistry could drive him from the obstinate conviction that Jesus had indeed spoken to him from the heavens.

And as I look into the pages of human experience, I find a thousand stories to corroborate Paul's story. A young girl listens to a strange preacher in a Norwich meeting-house, and weeps, she scarce knows why; grace had met her that day, and all the world reveres the name of Elizabeth Fry. A wild seaman, in depths of his sin, hears the appealing voice of Jesus; his name is John Newton, and it is he who writes the sweetest hymn upon the grace of God the world possesses. And the secret in each case is the same; grace met Saul of Tarsus, and Elizabeth Fry, and John Newton, and each appropriated the grace. They were not disobedient.—W. J. Dawson, in The Evangelistic Note.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Paul's indignation. Was his outburst of anger before the Sanhedrin at the beginning of his trial justified? See Chapter XV of The Character of Paul, by C. E. Jefferson.

2. Paul's courtesy. See Chapter XIV of The Character of Paul, by C. E. Jefferson.

3. Paul as an orator.

4. The evil of procrastination.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Do all great men need, like Paul, encouragement on the way? 2. Why had Paul been so desirous of coming to Rome? 3. How did all things which happened to Paul "fall out unto the progress of the gospel," as he wrote from Rome to the Philippians? 4. What is your estimation of the man Paul? 5. What was Luke's purpose in writing The Acts, and in what way may it be said to have a logical ending?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL ON THE WITNESS STAND

Beginning the Lesson

Let us think back a moment to the time when Jesus was on trial for his life. Who was the Roman official who condemned him to death? Did Pilate find any fault

in Jesus? Pilate saw that the Pharisees and priests who clamored for the death of Jesus were moved by envy to do this, he saw that Jesus was innocent, he even seems to have felt something of the greatness of Jesus, and yet he ordered Jesus put to death on the cross.

Today we see another Roman official confronted by an innocent prisoner. Felix, the Roman procurator (governor) of Judea perceived the innocence of Paul, understood the maliciousness of his enemies, and yet, he, too, missed his great opportunity of being just. Pilate was moved by fear to condemn Jesus. It was greed that caused Felix to keep Paul in prison. Where does Felix come into the story?

Continue with The Historical Background and Explanations and Comments.

Waiting for a Convenient Season

Let us look for a moment at Felix. How do we know that Paul's words touched the conscience of Felix? What do you think of his way of settling the matter then?

"We do not know what Drusilla felt, but as Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come, Felix trembled. He had reason to tremble. Conscience had him by the throat. Many a scene of greed and treachery and blood is there in his past life for memory to call up for that Judgment to Come. For Felix's record in history is infamous, and conscience tells him bitter things as he listens to Paul. Conscience is God's kind voice calling him to repentance. And for the moment it seems as if he wanted to repent. But like many another he does not want to repent just yet. 'Go thy way, some other day at a more convenient season I will call thee again.'" And that convenient season never arrived for him.

A revival swept through the university at Princeton, New Jersey. Aaron Burr came to the president of the university and said, "Mr. President, I have made up my mind to consider the claims of Christ. Now, Mr. President, what would you do?" And the old president of the university gave him this advice: he said, "Burr, if I were you, I would wait until the excitement of the revival is subsided, and then I would think it out carefully." Aaron Burr bowed his head a moment, and then he said, "Mr. President, that is exactly what I will do." And, it is stated as a fact, that never again in his life did he express a desire to be a Christian, and they say he died without such an expression.

I Would that you Might Become Such as I Am

Paul was not boasting, he had not been disobedient to the heavenly vision, he had striven to be like his Master, he had spent his life in his Master's service. Someone has beautifully said of Paul: "It seemed as if, when Christ left the world, he determined to leave behind this brave image of himself, this servant and follower who embodied in his noble life all that his Master had taught and been; and who proved by the very magnificence of his tearful and lowly service how omnipotent the ascended Christ was in reproducing himself in his followers."

A similar true follower of Christ was the head of one of the biggest concerns of our country, which employed thousands of men. Dr. S. D. Gordon records an incident told by the man's son. The two were on a train together. The father left his seat and a man sitting opposite came over and spoke to the son. His flashy manner of dress and the fact that he seemed to have been drinking suggested the sort of man he was. "Wasn't that Mr. ——?" he asked. "Yes," the son replied. "Well," said the man as though talking to himself, "if there were more men like him there'd be fewer like me." And he returned to his seat and sat as if absorbed in thought. The son in speaking of it after his father's death said that it was one of the tenderest memories he had of his father. Which sort of influence are you going to exert?

Sentence Sermons

Any time is no time.—Proverb.

He's armed without that's innocent within.—Pope.

I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience.—Shakespeare.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Read Acts 21.1 to 28.31. 2. Why did Paul thank God and take courage on the way from Syracuse to Rome? 3. What did the Jews mean by "this sect," verse 22? 4. How did Paul show his ability to make the most of circumstances? 5. What did Paul say in Phil. 1.12-14 that he accomplished during his imprisonment in Rome?

LESSON X—DECEMBER 9

PAUL GOES TO ROME

GOLDEN TEXT: I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Romans 1.16

LESSON Acts 27.1-28.31; Romans 1.8-15; Philippians 1.12-14

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91.9-16

ACTS 28.11 And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. 12 And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 13 And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; 14 where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. 15 And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and the Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. 20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with *me*: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE END OF THE JOURNEY TO ROME, verses 11-15. Three months after the shipwreck off the island of Malta (Melita. See The Historical Background), when navigation began in the early spring, Paul and the rest of the company set sail in a ship from Alexandria called The Twin Brothers from the sign painted on its prow. See Light from Oriental Life. They stopped for three days at Syracuse, on the island of Sicily, and for a day at Rhegium, on the Italian coast. Puteoli, the corn mart of Italy, on the Bay of Naples, was the destination of the ship. There a week was spent. News of Paul's coming to Rome reached the Christians there, and two companies journeyed over the Appian Way to meet him, one coming as far as the Market of Appius, forty-three miles from Rome, and the other to the Three Taverns, an inn ten miles from Rome. Their coming greatly rejoiced and encouraged Paul: he thanked God, and took courage.

"It was midway between a shipwreck and a prison: Paul has been in peril of his life, and he was going into greater peril. He had barely escaped the storm to fall into the hands of Cæsar. In this sad plight, a little group of Christian brethren in Rome, having heard that Paul was coming, went out to meet him; and his heart was filled with gratitude. When he saw them he thanked God and took courage. Thus it is that they who have lost almost everything, count up the gifts of God which still remain and are surprised to find them so many and so precious. They appreciate them the more highly for their fewness. Some people have so much to be thankful for that they are not very thankful for anything" (George Hodges).

And then they entered Rome. "How contemptuously emperor and philosopher and priest and patrician would have curled their lips if they had been told that in that little knot of Jewish prisoners lay a power before which theirs would cower and finally fade!" (Alexander Maclaren). Accompanied by his friends, Paul, though a prisoner, made almost a triumphal entry. "They could not release him from

bonds, but they could walk beside him on that sorrowful journey and cheer him with word and look."

"We all find ourselves at one time or another in sorrows which our friends can do nothing to end, but which they may do everything to transform. What experience could be more heartening in a day of trouble than to look up and see the faces and hear the words of loyal friends? Truly there is nothing more lovely in the world than the sympathy of our friends" (Tertius van Dyke).

"The double expression of arrival at Rome in verses 14 and 16 is remarkable, but it seems due to the double sense that every name of a city-state bears in Greek: the word *Rome* might either include the entire territory of the city, the whole *ager Romanus,* or be restricted to the walls and buildings. Thus verse fourteen, 'We reached the state Rome,' the bounds of which were probably pointed out as the party reached them; in verse fifteen, 'We passed through two points in the *ager Romanus';* and in verse sixteen, 'We entered the walls of Rome'" (Wm. H. Ramsay).

II. A PRISONER IN ROME, verse 16. Upon reaching Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, though guarded by a soldier, to whom he was probably chained. Soldiers relieved one another in this duty, and thus Paul became known throughout the Prætorian Guard, Phil. 1.12, 13. In his letters Paul never describes himself as a prisoner of Rome, but always as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. "Do you think many of those soldiers who were fastened to Paul got away without being influenced for Christ? I do not. Every soul he came into contact with was an opportunity, and all his life as far as active service went, was poured out in the doing of this one thing" (G. Campbell Morgan).

III. PAUL MEETS THE CHIEF JEWS OF ROME, verses 17-22. After resting only three days, Paul summoned the chief Jews in the city to meet him. He had been warmly welcomed by his fellow Christians, but he was anxious to know what attitude the leading Jews would take toward him. He told them of his experiences, declaring that though he had in no way violated the customs of "our fathers," the Jews of Jerusalem had delivered him to the Roman authorities as a prisoner. The latter had been ready to set him at liberty, not finding cause against him, but the Jews opposed this and he had been forced to appeal to Cæsar, "not," he added, "that I had aught thereof to accuse my nation." "They were still his nation, and he was not ashamed to call them so, as a true patriot, when he stood before a foreign tribunal." "See what friendliness of expression," exclaims Chrysostom; "he does not hold them in odium."

He had sent for them, Paul told them, to tell them this: for because of the hope of Israel, the Messianic hope, he had been put in chains.

The most difficult task before Paul, the one he naturally most dreaded, was this conference with those Jewish authorities, and therefore he attended to this first of all. "Tackle the dread" is the counsel which hangs over a business man's desk. It is good counsel.

The Jews politely answered that they had had neither written nor verbal report from Jerusalem concerning Paul; they wished to hear what he had to say, although they knew that this sect (speaking of the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts 24.5, as they would of the sect of the Sadducees) was everywhere condemned.

Why were the Roman Jews so reserved and conciliatory? "The commonly received answer is that they lived in Rome in a state of great insecurity. They had but recently been allowed to return from banishment. Some think the decree of banishment had been occasioned by tumults caused by the unbelieving Jews attacking their Christian fellow-countrymen. They saw Paul respected by imperial officers; they felt themselves obliged to be very careful to avoid all show of disturbance."

IV. PREACHING AND TEACHING IN ROME, verses 23, 24, 30, 31. A special day was appointed when great numbers of Jews came to Paul's lodging to hear him. He made known to them the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God (for the common Jewish belief was in a temporal kingdom), and by recalling the law and the prophets he endeavored to persuade them to believe in Jesus. All day he preached, and the result was, as always, that some believed and some disbelieved.

"A pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men,

grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigor from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the capital. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the time or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans it has been widely spread to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chile, in a world unknown to the ancients" (Cardinal Gibbons).

To all who came to hear him Paul proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and taught them concerning Jesus, speaking with all boldness, none forbidding him.

"Most of us have now and then to endure enforced pauses in life. We suffer the isolation of the sick chamber; are excluded from office; exchange busy life for retirement, obscurity, leisure. Let us beware of giving place to weariness, depression, inaction. Let us see if the suspended activity is not a new opportunity" (W. L. Watkinson).

For two whole years Paul lived a prisoner in his own hired house. Such delays in bringing a prisoner to trial were not unusual. His fate is not certainly known. It is supposed that he was tried and acquitted, but was later re-arrested, condemned and executed.

Luke has now closed his account of Paul's life and words. Does the Book of The Acts end here, or does it merely stop? What was Luke's purpose in his writing? (See our Introduction.) Has he accomplished it?

"The New Acts of the Apostles is now being written. He who realizes that the God within the Bible is the God within our own perplexed life—individual, social, national—and dares apply the visions of the old time to the problems of the new, is in the true apostolic succession" (W. H. P. Faunce).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

Whose sign was The Twin Brothers, verse 11. Painted or carved on the prow of ancient ships was an image of a god, or some emblem of a deity, such as the shield of Minerva, or any image of a man or an animal. This image was the ship's sign which gave the ship her name. According to mythology, Castor and Pollux were the Twin Brothers, the sons of Jupiter and Leda, and were regarded as the tutelar gods of sailors. They were sometimes represented merely by two stars, hovering over a ship, but usually as two young men on horseback wearing conical caps and having stars above them.

We came to Puteoli, verse 13. In Paul's time the city of Rome depended almost entirely on foreign cornfields for its bread. Egypt was the chief source of supply, and every year an enormous quantity of grain was shipped at Alexandria for Puteoli or Ostia. The vessels which carried it were of a specially large build, and the Alexandrian corn-fleet was the most striking feature in the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean. As any delay in the arrival of the fleet was the source of great anxiety at Rome, so its arrival was hailed at Puteoli with great rejoicings. Signalmen were on the lookout to announce its approach, and they were able to recognize it by the privilege these vessels possessed of entering the bay of Naples with their sails set.—R. B. Rackham.

In his own hired dwelling, preaching the Kingdom of God, verses 30, 31. The Christian practise of meeting in private houses continued until the close of the second century. An elevated seat for the teacher and a table for the Lord's Supper were provided in the regular places of meeting. In The Church in the Early Centuries, Professor T. M. Lindsay says: "The ground plan of the earliest Roman church, discovered in 1900 in the Forum at Rome, is modeled, not on the basilica or public hall, but on the audience hall of the wealthy Roman burgher, and the recollections of the familiar surroundings at the meetings in the house-churches probably guided the pencil of the architect who first planned the earliest public buildings dedicated to Christian worship."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What Christians from Rome had Paul met at Corinth? What lessons have we

had from Paul's letter to the Romans? What was the purport of the first of these lessons? Of the second? In what cities before this had Paul's preaching resulted in some believing and some disbelieving?

From Cæsarea to Fair Havens

After the hearing before Agrippa, Festus gave Paul and certain other prisoners into the charge of a centurion named Julius to be taken to Rome. A ship from Adramyttium was about to make the return voyage to the coast of Asia Minor, and Julius took passage with his prisoners. Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica were with Paul. The ship stopped at Sidon, when Julius kindly allowed Paul to see his friends, and then crossed over to Cyprus and sailing around the eastward end of the island, went northwestward to Myra, in the province of Lycia. This harbor was a great port for ships from Egypt and Syria. They were fortunate in finding there a ship from Alexandria that was bound directly for Italy, and they sailed with it. The wind was unfavorable, and it took them many days to reach Cnidus, the southwestern point of Asia Minor, and not being able to cross the Ægean Sea to Greece, as they should have done, they turned southward to Crete. Sailing along the southern shore of that island, they succeeded with difficulty in reaching Fair Havens, where they waited for a change of wind.

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A Brass Medal Struck in the Time of Nero, Representing the Port of Ostia
Here are represented a statue of the Emperor and various vessels and boats of the day.

After a tedious delay the question of continuing the voyage was discussed. The season for navigation lasted from September fourteenth to November eleventh, and then all navigation on the open sea ceased until March, we are told. "The ship reached Fair Havens in the latter part of September, and was detained there by a continuance of unfavorable winds until October fifth." Paul advised them not to start out again, for he knew a voyage would be attended by great danger to the ship and to their lives. But the harbor was not a good one in which to pass the winter, the captain and owner of the ship were anxious to reach Phœnix and winter there, and the centurion naturally paid more heed to their advice than to Paul's. It was decided to sail for Phœnix.

"Neither the captain nor the centurion resented Paul's advice, but they thought that they knew better," writes P. Whitwell Wilson. "The captain was also shipowner. He wanted his profit on the lading. He was ready for a gamble. Nor was he deterred by the peril of other lives than his own. He was an employer who neglected safety appliances. He had no life-belts and only one life-boat on board. His motive was commerce, and where the telescope pointed to prudence, to fear of God, which is the beginning even of industrial wisdom, he applied his blind eye."

The Stormy Voyage from Fair Havens

When the northwest wind which had kept the ship at Fair Havens gave place to a gentle south wind, they set sail, expecting to reach Phœnix in a few hours. But the wind again suddenly changed and the ship could not face the violent northeast gale that blew down against it from over the high mountains of Crete. They were obliged to give way to the wind and allow it to drive them from their course. Running under the shelter of the small island of Cauda, they managed there to hoist on board the small boat they had been towing, and to pass strong cables around the ship's hull to prevent its timbers from starting, at the same time lowering all the unnecessary rigging or perhaps throwing out weights to retard the progress of the ship toward the dangerous quicksands off the African coast. The storm grew worse and the next day they threw out part of the freight; on the third day the heavier tackling of the ship was flung overboard. Not a glimpse of the sun could be had nor was a star visible, and the sailors could not tell where they were, food could scarcely be prepared and no one cared for it, crew and passengers were only waiting for the ship to sink, for they had lost all hope of being saved. Then Paul reminded them that he had warned them against sailing from Crete, and now he had another message for them; and he exhorted them to be of good cheer, telling them of the vision he had had and of the assurance that no life should be lost although they would be cast on an island—for he must stand before Cæsar, and God had granted

him all those that sailed with him. The promise had come from God, whose he was and whom he served, and he believed God's promises.

About midnight on the fourteenth night from Fair Havens, repeated soundings showed that they were approaching land. Fearing they might be dashed against rocks, they threw out the anchors to wait for daylight.

The Shipwreck

The fourteenth night out from Fair Havens the ship rode at anchor near the land, and when day dawned a sandy beach was seen in the midst of the rocky shore. It was determined to make an effort to beach the vessel there. The anchors were cut off, the rudders freed from their fastenings, and the foresail hoisted. The vessel moved forward, but soon her bow was firmly held in the mud a short distance from the shore, and her stern was broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers wished to kill all the prisoners lest they should make their escape on reaching land, but this the centurion would not permit on Paul's account, and he commanded all who could swim to jump overboard and reach the land first so as to help the others who made their escape on planks and fragments of the ship.

It was the island of Malta which they all thus reached in safety, and the inhabitants treated them very kindly, making a fire on shore, for it was cold and raining. Paul busied himself in gathering sticks and throwing them on the fire, and the others were startled to see a viper that he had taken up with the sticks spring out of the pile and fasten on his hands. "He is a murderer," they said one to another, "he has indeed escaped death at sea, but now he receives his just punishment." But Paul calmly shook off the viper into the fire, and when he failed to fall down dead from the bite as they expected, they changed their minds in regard to him and said that he must be a god. Publius, the chief man on the island, courteously entertained them for three days, and Paul repaid his kindness by curing the illness of his father. Other sick ones were brought to Paul and he healed them. When three months had passed all were able to continue the journey to Rome in a ship from Alexandria that had wintered in the chief harbor of the island, the things needful for the voyage having been put aboard for them by the grateful inhabitants of Malta.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Malta it was a day's sail to Syracuse on the eastern coast of Sicily. Crossing from Sicily to Italy through the southern entrance of the Straits of Messina, Paul's

ship touched at Rhegium, and then followed the coast northward as far as Puteoli, at the northern extremity of the Bay of Naples. Puteoli has been aptly called "The Liverpool of Rome," for it was the usual harbor for ships from the East carrying passengers or freight for the imperial city. The rest of the journey was by land.

Twelve miles from Puteoli Paul and his company reached Capua, and the celebrated Appian Way, broad and finely paved, over which for five hundred years victorious generals and armies had marched. Forty-three miles from Rome they came to the Markets of Appius, and ten miles from the capital to another station called The Three Taverns.

Rome, the capital of the Empire, is on the Tiber about fifteen miles from its mouth. Its population at this time was 1,600,000. Although the Colisseum and other reminders today of Rome's ancient greatness did not then exist, the city was, nevertheless, the chief city of the world in wealth and splendor.

Near the Ghetto, or Jews' Quarters, a building is shown to tourists as the traditional "hired house" where Paul lived (The church of St. Maria is also said to be the site of that house), while beneath a church near the Forum is the Mamertime Prison, the reputed place of Paul's second imprisonment. On the summit of a column one hundred and twenty feet high erected by Marcus Aurelius in a piazza near the center of Rome there is a statue of Paul, which is his only memorial within the city. Outside the walls of Rome, a mile and a half away, over the spot where Paul was supposed to have been buried, a church was erected in the fourth century. It has been many times restored. The present magnificent marble cathedral of St. Paul's without the Walls was erected in 1854. Another church on the Ostian Road marks the supposed place of his martyrdom.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

One of the characteristics of the teaching of Jesus that impressed all who heard him was the authority with which he spoke. We have found Paul at all times "preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus with all boldness." The note of confidence should never be lacking in the teacher's message about his Lord. "I know him whom I have believed!"

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

DIVINE LEADERSHIP IN PAUL'S LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

After his salutation Paul begins his letter to the Romans with these words: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you."

Was his prayer answered? When he said "by any means" could he have thought of coming there a prisoner on trial for his life? He did reach Rome, but as Dr. J. H. Jowett says, "What a road it was by which he came there! Who would have imagined that this would have been the 'prosperous' way by which he would arrive? He passed to Rome through arrest, shipwreck, pain and tears!'

"And yet" continues Dr. Jowett, "when he had settled in Rome and was able to look upon his troubled condition, he saw that in spite of apparent misfortune his prayer had been answered gloriously: 'The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel,' he wrote. The apparent misfortune turned out to be the best fortune, and the heavy road proved to be the highway of the Lord."

In his prison in Rome Paul received and taught the Jews and the Gentile Christians of the city and also those who came to him from all lands. The Roman soldiers went away from his abode to distant lands carrying with them the good news concerning the Lord Jesus which they learned from him, messengers from distant churches returned with special messages—epistles which have given light and help throughout the centuries since. We have seen the divine leadership throughout Paul's life, and we can see it especially in the closing years spent in Rome. His imprisonment turned out for the furtherance of his great purpose, that of making the gospel known to the uttermost part of the earth.

God Is his Own Interpreter

In Bedford, England, Dr. Wayland Hoyt looked long and earnestly at the jail door there preserved which for twelve years was locked on John Bunyan, and thought of the prayers that Bunyan must have pleaded behind it for its opening. "But how fruitful were those years!" he exclaims. "Dreams were going on behind that door, and the world needed them. When The Pilgrim's Progress of which Bunyan dreamed had taken shape and tangibility, Bunyan's Lord, who had never for an instant forgotten him while the slow years passed, swung the jail door wide." In his prison at Athens, Socrates completed his great argument for immortality; in a Roman dungeon Galileo made some of his greatest discoveries. From his exile on the isle of Patmos John wrote the Book of Revelation. In his hiding place in Wartburg castle Luther translated the New Testament into the German language.

"God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay;
The good can well afford to wait."

God's Plan for the World

Paul's certainty that God has a plan for the universe rests on a consciousness that God had a plan for Paul, not of Paul's choice or devising, which was carried through all against Paul's initial wishes, and was justified. We also have to admit with History before us that this conviction of Paul has been justified by the experience of nineteen centuries.

Paul believed in a plan of God for the world—"that nothing walks with aimless feet." Paul may be in bonds, "but the Word of God is no prisoner," 2. Tim. 2.9. If he is asked for his evidence, it begins with the failure of the spiritual and social leaders of Israel, reinforced by a young man from Tarsus in Cilicia, to stamp out the church of Christ when it was a mere handful of trivial people in Jerusalem. The rest of his evidence was of the same kind—a mass of experience that no man could have foretold, all shot through with one note of incredible triumph—"we are more than conquerors," all full of proof of the presence of God in his power and his wisdom.—T. R. Glover, in Paul of Tarsus.

The Gospel of the Incomplete

In two verses we are told that Paul lived for two years in a rented house, a prisoner awaiting trial, but preaching freely to those who came to him. There the story ends.

Was he tried and convicted? We rather think not, at that time. We judge that the case was dismissed for lack of evidence, the long delay having wearied out the prosecution, that he was set at liberty and later re-imprisoned, under conditions of greater severity, and that he died a martyr. But we have to infer this from certain allusions in the later epistles. The narrative itself is incomplete.

Life itself is like that. At no stage do we find it finished.

At Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln reminded his hearers that they could not do very much in the way of dedicating the soil where the battle had been fought; this soil had been already dedicated by the heroism of brave men, living and dead. But he said it was possible for those present, and for the people of the nation, to dedicate themselves to the unfinished task which heroism and patriotism had so nobly begun.

That task is still incomplete, and will not be finished till political and social life in a government by the people is made secure. The task is incomplete in the moral sphere. The incompleteness is our opportunity, our good news. In a very real sense it is the heart of our gospel. The Father worketh hitherto, and we work.—The Youth's Companion.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. What Paul accomplished.

2. The place that Paul holds in religious life today.

3. Is the foreign missionary enterprise still necessary? See Lecture VII of The Unfinished Task of Foreign Missions, by Robert E. Speer.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

1. Which four of Paul's letters were written during his imprisonment in Rome? 2. How may this personal letter to Philemon have been preserved? 3. How does the

letter show Paul's remarkable courtesy? 4. How does it show the breadth of his friendship? 5. What place had friendship in Paul's life?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL MAKES THE MOST OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Beginning the Lesson

What is our Golden Text? Can you think of a reason why Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel" instead of saying, "I am proud of the gospel"? There had been a time when he was ashamed of it; when? Before he had his vision of Christ, on the way to Damascus, he did not believe that Jesus was the Savior, and he would have been ashamed to belong to that little company whose Savior was the crucified Jesus, for he thought his Savior must be a great and powerful earthly king.

What is the latter part of our Golden Text? These words explain why Paul changed his mind in regard to Jesus—he had seen his power and the power of his life and death. His own life had been an example of what that power could do through man. Where was he when he wrote his letter to the Romans, from which our Golden Text is taken? He was then in Corinth, and had never been in Rome. He was very desirous of going to Rome. Three months after his letter was sent, he was in a prison at Cæsarea. And in our lesson today we find him at Rome.

Let us review hastily the incidents which brought him there. Why was he in prison at Cæsarea? How did it come about that he was sent from there to Rome? What did Paul do for the others on board the ship in which he was sailing across the Mediterranean when a terrible storm arose? What catastrophe befell the ship? How did Paul and the rest escape? Where did they spend three months? At what place did they stop on their way from there to Rome? What greatly encouraged Paul on the way? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

How Paul Lived at Rome

Julius, the centurion, would be sure to speak well of Paul to the officers of the guard. "He is a splendid fellow, this Paul. We owe much to him on this journey. You can trust him to the uttermost. If you were even to parole him on his own simple promise you would be perfectly safe. Such men as he could not lie to you. Be as good to him as you can."

And so instead of languishing in the Prætorian dungeons, he was allowed to live outside in his own hired lodging with the soldier that guarded him and with free leave to see and communicate with his friends. Paul's letters refer frequently to his chains and his bonds. "The soldier that guarded him" may seem a small matter. But put yourself in his place. Think of the intolerable infliction of being chained all the time to another, a heathen soldier, often a brutal, beastly sort of man.

But Paul had to get used to it. And I think he did more, that he made his guards like him. You see the duty would not be very irksome to them for a few hours at a time. They could not help admiring the high character and kindly disposition of their prisoner. I can well believe that some of them grew attached to him, that little groups of them off duty would drop in and talk to him in the evenings. And Paul could not be long in intercourse with any man without helping him towards higher things. They often chatted to each other in barracks about their prisoner and his religion. And he was quite pleased at this. He tells the Philippians in a letter of this period: "The things that have happened to me have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, for my bonds in Christ have become manifest throughout the whole Prætorian Guard." We gather that some of them became faithful disciples of Christ, for he writes in the same letter: "The Christian brethren that are here salute you, especially those that are of Cæsar's household," who would probably be the Prætorian life-guards. When one thinks how many soldiers would come in close touch with him in the continual change of the guard during two years, one can imagine the difference it would make in that regiment.

The Roman Christians were, of course, his most frequent visitors. You can well believe that his presence in that prison room deepened the whole life of that Christian community. Many a poor sinner would come to him in his trouble. Many a poor presbyter would come to consult him and to talk about Jesus and go back to his congregation with his spirit stirred to preach to them the next Sunday as he had never preached before. Paul himself wrote to the Philippians: "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear."—J. Paterson-Smyth.

How Another Prisoner Made the Most of Circumstances

In a disreputable quarrel Paul Graynor killed a man and was sentenced to forty years' imprisonment. In prison he came to himself, was filled with remorse for his former life, and resolved to make the best possible use of the opportunities still left him. He became a sort of prison evangelist, and led many of his associates to seek and find the Savior whom he called his Master. He organized classes and taught stenography, bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic. Several of his pupils secured good positions upon their release. At the end of fifteen years a pardon was granted him, but he refused to accept it.

"Happy as he must have been that liberty was within reach," says The Youth's Companion, "and that he had so lived as thus to commend himself to the authorities of the prison and the commonwealth, he still refused to accept the pardon. He sent word to the governor that he was worth nothing to the world outside, but that within the prison walls he had found a place of usefulness among his fellow convicts. So he faces the coming twenty-five years behind the bars, with rejoicing that thus he may fulfil his mission among those whom he can assist toward lives of hope and usefulness.

"The lesson of this man's life is full of encouragement. The secret of it is the power of the spirit to conquer difficulties and break material bonds. The reason he is willing to remain in prison is because he has long since escaped from prison.

'Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.'

"Many a life that suffers from inevitable limitations which constitute a life imprisonment amid uncongenial surroundings, might become radiant and beautiful if it could discover the secret of this convict. Many a heart beating its life out in bitter and unavailing protest against its unhappy conditions might become blessed in becoming a blessing to others."

What We May Be and Do

The Bible does not tell us everything that we should like to know. Its writers do not pretend that they know all that they could wish to be sure about. Of many things it must be said, "It doth not yet appear." But those words are not to be construed as a mere negation. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" does not mean the placing of a barrier, but the removal of a limitation. The words suggest possibilities greater and finer than those of our meager imagination. They warn us against accepting too near an horizon. And we must not think of it as a promise intended wholly for heaven. That may be, and probably is, included; but the promise is also for this life.

The lives of the great instruct us in many ways, one of which is that almost any of them might easily have missed being great if he had failed to take advantage of some favorable opportunity such as other men neglect. Some men may improve every opportunity and never be great; but that does not prove that it is right to neglect opportunities. The honor roll of those who have entered into life in its higher and larger meanings is a list of those who have not let themselves slip into disregard of opportunities for larger service and greater goodness.

What we are to be must be related to what we are. "Even now are we the sons of God." That is why it is reasonable for us to hope for and proper to expect the very best. So much for this life; and why not also for heaven?—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons

Make us to meet what is or is to be
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
To serve us in some way full excellent,
Though we discern it all belatedly.—James Whitcomb Riley.

I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best.—Browning.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

1. How many letters of the New Testament were written by Paul? 2. Name them. 3. What does Col. 4.9 tell us about this letter to Philemon? 4. Who was Philemon? 5. Who was Onesimus? 6. Read the whole letter. 7. What part is the salutation? 8. What does Paul say in verses 4-7? 9. When one is a true Christian, how will he treat the one who has wronged him?

PAUL AND HIS FRIENDS

GOLDEN TEXT: A friend loveth at all times. Proverbs 17.17

LESSON Acts 20.36-38; Romans 16.1-4; Philippians 2.25-30; Philemon.

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 63.1-7

PHILEMON 8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, 9 yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: 10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, 11 who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: 12 whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: 13 whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 14 but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. 15 For perhaps he was therefore parted *from thee* for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; 16 no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. 18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth *thee* aught, put that to mine account; 19 I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE SALUTATION OF THE LETTER, verses 1-3. Timothy is with Paul, and joins him, "a prisoner of Christ Jesus," Paul writes, in sending greetings to Philemon, their beloved fellow-worker, and to Apphia and Archippus, presumably Philemon's wife and son, and to the church that meets in his house. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

II. THANKSGIVING FOR PHILEMON'S FAITH AND LOVE AND SERVICE, verses 4-7. Philemon was a man of means who had distinguished himself by his deeds of charity. He was zealous in spreading the gospel, and his house was the meeting-place of a group of Colossian Christians. Paul writes Philemon that he thanks God always as he mentions him in his prayers, "for I have much joy and comfort in thy love."

"I'm your friend now; I put you in my prayer last night!" were the words with which a little child greeted a house guest one morning—a beautiful way in which to take the first step toward a desired friendship. As Emerson says, the only way to have a friend is to be one, and we cannot fail to be friendly to those for whom we are praying.

III. INTERCESSION FOR ONESIMUS, verses 8-21. "Wherefore"—thus Paul begins his intercession for Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave. Paul's "wherefore" means that since Philemon has proved himself good in so many particulars, especially in his love and care of the followers of Christ (as he has just written), Paul will expect from him the further proof of his goodness, that he will forgive Onesimus and welcome him kindly on his return.

"A disposition to do good, together with past instances and expressions of it, is a good handle to take hold of for pressing to more" (Matthew Henry).

Wherefore, rather than use my apostolic authority and command you, as well I might, to do that which is befitting, I rather plead with you as Paul the aged, the prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ, in behalf of my child, Onesimus. (Onesimus was a convert of Paul's and therefore Paul calls him his child.)

"Paul the aged. How old was he? Probably somewhere about sixty—not a very great age, but life was somewhat shorter then than now, and Paul was, no doubt, aged by work, by worry, and by his unresting spirit, But Paul the aged was full of interest in the things of the day; no mere 'praiser of time gone by,' but a strenuous worker, cherishing a quick sympathy and eager interest which kept him young in spirit to the end. Over his cheery, sympathetic, busy old age there is thrown the light of a great hope and parts him by a whole universe from the old whose future is dark and their past dreary, whose hope is a phantom, and their memory a pang" (Alexander Maclaren).

Once Onesimus was unprofitable to you, but now he is profitable both to you and to me. (There is a play here upon the name Onesimus, which means Profitable, Helpful.) I am sending him who is my life back to you, though I would gladly have kept him with me, that as a gift from you—since he is your slave—he might minister to me in my imprisonment, which has resulted from my preaching the gospel. But without your consent I would not do this, for your goodness should be a free-will offering, not compulsory.

Perhaps he was separated from you for a time that you might have him as an eternal possession, not as a servant but as a brother beloved, as he is especially to me, and how much more to you, both in human relationship and through your common relationship to your Lord.

"Paul insisted that in Christ there could not be bound and free; and so he did away, at least between Christians, with the servile relation of property to owner. In the personal contacts of employer and employed, sincere Christians have found it possible to embody the Spirit of Christ in both positions. They have lived together in these relations in mutual respect, confidence and affection. Among us no Christian employer feels justified in asking for an attitude of deferential servility—that is recognized as both unAmerican and unChristian" (Henry Sloane Coffin).

If, then, you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me. "Imagine Paul arriving at Colossæ and knocking at Philemon's door. What rejoicings there would be through the whole household, alike in master and slaves! What delight in all hearts, on all faces! Just such a welcome he now asks for the wandering sheep that has come back to the fold. His request is not only for pardon and complete restoration, but also for the welcome of a brother in the household of faith" (Godet).

If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, charge it to me. I solemnly promise that I will repay it. And I do not remind you that you owe me your very self—your life in Christ. Yes, brother, let me rejoice in the Lord because of him, refresh my heart in Christ. I write thus to you because I have had faith in you and know that you will do even more than I have requested.

A sure way to bring out the best in another is to expect the best from him. One with a "Well, I suppose I can't expect anything from you" attitude toward another will never arouse in that one a desire to do better. Meet others with confidence and trust, and they will endeavor to show you that you are not mistaken in your estimate of them. George Eliot says somewhere that we hold half our virtues through the faith which others have in us.

We do not know what was the result of this plea for Onesimus, but we think Philemon could do no less than forgive him, receive him kindly, and send him back laden with gifts to Paul to remain with him and serve him.

IV. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, verse 22. Paul has hopes of being set free and of visiting Philemon.

V. GREETINGS FROM FRIENDS, verses 23, 24.

VI. FAREWELL BENEDICTION, verse 25.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

My child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, verse 10. If one teaches the son of his neighbor the law, so the Mishna declared, the Scripture reckons this the same as though he had begotten him.

A bondservant, verse 16 (margin of Revised Version). It is difficult for us to realize how prominent a feature slavery was in the first century in the Roman Empire. Apparently, slaves outnumbered free men by four to one. In some households there were as many as four thousand slaves. A proposal was made that all slaves must wear a distinctive dress, but was promptly abandoned through the fear that the slaves might realize their power when their vast number was so clearly indicated. A slave-owner had complete authority over a slave, who was only a "living chattel." By degrees laws forbidding sheer inhumanity to slaves were introduced, but as late as 300 A. D. a synod agreed that it might be legitimate for a Christian mistress to whip her slave-maid to death.—R. C. Gillie.

In the year that Paul arrived in Rome a slave killed a prefect of the city, and in revenge four hundred slaves—men, women and children—were put to death. "In the reign of Augustus," says Bishop Moule, "one Vedius Pollio, a friend of the emperor's, was accustomed to throw offending slaves into his fish-pond, to feed his huge electric eels. He was one day entertaining Augustus at table, when the cupbearer broke a crystal goblet, and was forthwith sentenced to the eels. The poor fellow threw himself at his owner's feet, begging not to be forgiven, but to be killed in some other way, and Augustus, shocked and angered, ordered the man's emancipation, and had Pollio's crystals all broken before him, and his horrible pool filled up; but he did not discard his friend."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

Name the friends of Paul's who have appeared in our lessons. How did his Ephesian friends show their love for him? How do we know that his friends in Corinth were devoted to him? What did his Philippian friends do for him?

Paul's Life in Rome

We know that during those two years in Rome "the care of the churches" weighed heavily upon Paul, and from the four Epistles probably written at this time—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians—we know that he was blessed with the companionship of friends. Timothy and three others, Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, and Mark, who has been forgiven his defection at Antioch (15.39), were "a comfort" to him. Demas, a "fellow-worker," and Luke, "the beloved physician," were with him; Tychicus, whom he used as a messenger, Epaphras, who brought him news from Colossæ, Epaphroditus, who brought him a contribution from Philippi, and Onesimus, the runaway Christian slave of Colossæ, were among his visitors.

The Epistle to Philemon

Philemon was a resident of Colossæ in Phrygia, who had been converted through Paul's ministry, perhaps at Ephesus. His slave Onesimus had run away, and at Rome had come under Paul's influence and been converted to Christ. He had served Paul with grateful devotion, and Paul had become much attached to him. When Tychicus went to Asia Minor (Col. 4.7-9), Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this special letter of intercession.

Dr. Alexander Maclaren speaks of the light which this letter throws upon the character of Paul. "The warmth, the delicacy, and what, if it were not so spontaneous, we might call tact, the graceful ingenuity with which he pleads for the fugitive, the perfect courtesy of every word, the gleam of playfulness—all fused together and harmonized to one end, and that in so brief a compass and with such unstudied ease and complete self-oblivion, make this Epistle a pure gem. Without thought of effect, and with complete unconsciousness, this man beats all the famous letter-writers on their own ground."

Colossæ was situated in the beautiful valley of the Lycus River, a tributary of the Mæander, in Phrygia, a district of the Roman province of Asia. To the church here Paul wrote one of his letters.

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Paul was a prisoner in Rome, but he would not let that fact cause him to lose his influence over the churches he had founded and the individuals whose welfare he had so much at heart; he could keep in touch with them by means of letters. But the churches and the individuals were many, and with no typewriter or manifolder at his command he might well have deemed the task too laborious. Yet with painstaking care he wrote his letters on parchment and sent them off by trusted messengers.

Illness and vacations and other circumstances separate a teacher at times from his class. With far less labor than was Paul's he can keep in touch with his pupils by means of letters. And ofttimes a letter will make a deeper impression than do spoken words.

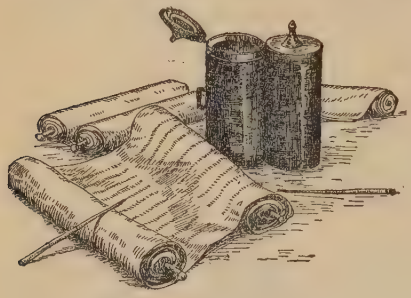
If you are planning to take the Christmas lesson next week, it will be well to combine with the lesson for today the alternate lesson for next week, Paul's Last Message, that the Close of Paul's life may be discussed.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PLACE OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Beginning the Lesson

If a man's having friends proves that he has shown himself friendly, then Paul must have been a most friendly man. A diligent Bible student has recorded the names of seventy-one friends of Paul mentioned in The Acts and Pauline Epistles, almost every one of which he introduced in some affectionate way. What friends of Paul have we come to know in our six months' course?



Ancient Writing Materials

The little letter called Philemon was written by Paul to one of his friends about another friend, for so he regarded this runaway slave. As Professor T. R. Glover says, with years Paul's sympathies widened, and he grew at once in attractiveness to men, and in liking for them, and understanding of them. The delicate tact of the letter to Philemon is familiar, but we sometimes forget how utterly alien to Paul in race and social standing, in intellectual and religious outlook, nearly everybody mentioned in the letter had originally been.

Paul was great in his friendships, and this little personal letter in regard to Onesimus is an indication of many strong attachments which he must have had with the rank and file among the people he knew. The friendships of the great apostle are well worth our studying.

The Place of Friendship in Paul's Life

We can put a man like Paul so far from us in our contemplation of his virtues that he ceases to really influence us except as something to wonder at. We can think of him as so unapproachable, and look at his goodness as like the sunlight that strikes upon the stainless peaks, that his example has for us no real inspiration. His untiring energy, his greatness of soul, his superiority to the things that tempt other men, the loftiness of mind which raised him above jealousies and envyings, the unselfishness of life which makes us feel poor and mean beside him, all the phenomenal qualities that constituted his greatness, tend to isolate him from our level. It is therefore good for us to note the common grounds of his life with ours—not that the idol has feet of clay, as mean natures love to remark, but that he never posed as an idol at all, that he was human in his every need.

He hungered for the help and sympathy of his friends, and felt desolate and helpless when he was deprived of them. More than once he lets us see that he was cast down and needing to be comforted by the coming of a friend like Titus. It was partly anxiety about the Corinthians, and also partly this human longing, which made him say, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother." It would need a separate article for each friend to trace the relationship in which Paul stood to Timothy, to Titus, to Luke, to Barnabas, and to many others. There is this to be noticed first of all about all these friendships, that it was not merely a relation of master and disciples. It was that in many cases, and added a new and sweet bond between them. But he also seemed to lean on them for sympathy and help—as, for example, Titus, of whom he says, "God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." Or, again, he writes to Timothy with a tone of pleading in the words, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

He was not afraid to let his comrades know how much he leaned on them and prized their faithfulness. He was not afraid to let his friends know how much he loved them, and never grudged praise to his associates. What a generous, large-hearted friend Paul was! He hardly ever mentions one of his fellow-workers without an endearing epithet, such as "my beloved," or "our sister," or "our laborers in the Lord," or, as with Timothy, "my dearly beloved son." No wonder he received

such devoted love, and found men who would willingly have faced death for a look of commendation from him. Though he was one of the best hated of men, he was also one of the best loved. Read the last chapter of Romans, with its beautiful salutations, and you realize how Paul was blessed with friends.—Hugh Black, in The Gift of Influence.

Paul's Friends Were All in Sympathy with the Great Object for Which he Lived.

It was not exclusiveness which made Paul limit his comradeship to those who were like-minded. It was, for one thing, essential for the work. If a man had no interest in Christ, and in the extension of the kingdom of God, he could be no fit friend for Paul. This is not due to any tone of hardness in Paul's mind, nor narrowness which made him sacrifice anyone who could not see eye to eye with him; for, after all, it is the one essential condition of all true friendship. The only permanent relationship among men is a spiritual one. It does not mean thinking alike, and being alike in temperament and capacity, but it must mean some community in the things of the soul. If men never plumb the deepest parts of their nature, they cannot really know each other. No relation founded on physical contiguity or on intellectual tastes can, from the very nature of the case, be lasting. If another has no sympathy with us in our highest thoughts and noblest aspirations, there may be partnership or intercourse more or less pleasant, but there cannot be fellowship.—Hugh Black, in The Gift of Influence.

The Educational Value of Friendship

In his Autobiography, Dr. George A. Gordon has recorded the great friendships of his life. He prefaces his account of these happy recollections with his statement of what friendship should mean for one, that the great friend is the great educator. "The great friend is first of all a standard to which we look, and by which we measure ourselves, a standard for character, service, aim, and passionate desire." He quotes a stanza from Burns expressive of the happiness which friendship gives and then adds: "This is as beautiful as it is true; but what Burns needed above all things else were friends whose character should hold for him the heavenly visions, whose life should draw him into the stream of their own great endeavor, whose influence over him should liberate the best forces in him, and guide him in the most difficult of all enterprises, the conduct of life."

Speaking of his own friendship with President Eliot of Harvard, Dr. Gordon writes: "The story of forty years of growing intimacy is a long one, an epic of dignity and beauty in my career. President Eliot lived and served in the light of the highest standards, and he could accept as friends only those who were willing, and in dead earnest, to do the same. Silently, invariably, unalterably his influence upon me has been that I must strive, in the best sense, to do my best. No emotional explosions have ever occurred between us; but that which is highest in man's relation to man has been ever present."

What Friendship Involves

"Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts," said Thomas Hughes, the author of Tom Brown at Rugby. "It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one's self, and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another."

For Bible Class Discussion

1. War must be fought as Paul fought slavery. Paul did not stir up rebellion among slaves; on the contrary, he sent this special slave back to his master. But he sought to leaven society with the spirit of his Lord. His way of stopping slavery was to give both master and slave a common Master.

2. Old age. Passing years alone do not bring on old age.

3. The need of some deep community of interests in the highest friendship.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson

For the Lesson about Paul's Last Message. 1. Which are the Pastoral Epistles, and why are they so called? 2. What do we know about Paul's life after the two years in his own hired house at Rome? 3. What do you know about Nero, the Emperor under whom Paul was put to death? 4. Which life was more successful, Nero's or Paul's? 5. How do you define success? 6. What is your estimate of Paul?

For the Christmas Lesson

1. What does the Incarnation mean to you? 2. Is the Incarnation a doctrine to be fought over or a truth to be realized? 3. How much of yourself do you give at Christmas? 4. If you can keep Christmas for a day, why not always? as Dr. van Dyke questions.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PAUL AS A FRIEND

Beginning the Lesson

Among the many visitors to Paul in his prison room at Rome there came one day a young runaway slave, named Onesimus. He had run away from his master at Colossæ, and we suspect, from a reference in verse 18, had stolen money from him. He had made for the great city to hide himself and to have a good time. A big city is the safest of all hiding places. But one day someone brought him to see Paul. Or, perhaps, the poor, hunted lad remembered Paul as a visitor in old days at his master's house. For his master, Philemon, was one of Paul's old converts. He was a member of the Colossian church, and he and his good wife, Apphia, were close friends of the apostle, the sort of friends to whom you can write and offer yourself for a visit without waiting for an invitation. "You might get a room ready for me," Paul writes to him, "as I hope, through God's blessing, to come soon and visit you." It is only to very intimate friends that you can write like that.

Paul's heart warmed to the young slave. Young men had always a special attraction for him, and this young scamp must have had something very winning about him, in spite of his wickedness. For there grew a very close friendship between them. And Onesimus became penitent and became a disciple of Christ.

It is sometimes an awkward thing to become a Christian. For you feel impelled to do the right thing which is often a very unpleasant thing. The religion which Paul taught was very practical. Onesimus must not merely tell God that he is sorry, he must go back to his master and confess and take his punishment and make what restitution he can.

Some of us think it all right if we just tell God that we are sorry. That is a very easy thing to do, for we feel that God knows it already. Confession does not bring any awkward consequences. I once asked a small boy whether he had confessed to God a certain sin. "Yes," he said. And then he made me smile as he added, "You see, I don't mind telling God because he won't tell anybody." Have not you often felt like that? Repentance means more than that. It means earnest resolve for the future, also restitution, where possible, and willingness to take the unpleasant consequences. That was what Paul taught his convert. "You must go back, my lad, and do the right, though it will be very hard for you to go and very hard for me to part with you. But I will write a note to my old friend to take with you."

Reading a Letter

So he sent back Onesimus with this note, and, fortunately, Philemon kept the note, and I suppose he gave it afterwards to the Colossian church to preserve with Paul's epistles.—J. Paterson Smyth, in The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

Paul the Friend

Paul realized that to be a friend is to love unselfishly. "I seek not yours, but you. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls," he wrote to the Corinthians. He loved men for their own sakes, not for what they could be to him selfishly, though he rejoiced when they poured back such friendship as his in return.

And he knew not only that true friendship is selfless. He knew also that it is eternal. "Love never faileth," he declared.

No man had more of the genius for friendship than Paul. He and Barnabas were great friends. When they separated he chose Silas, and that friendship enriched his life for several years, when Barnabas disappears from our view. Silas shared many of Paul's great experiences, and when Paul went on to Athens alone, leaving Silas and Timothy in Macedonia, the apostle's hunger for his friends became too strong and they came on and joined him in Corinth (Acts 18.5). "What we read of the

effect produced upon his mind and work, when Timothy and Silas rejoined him," says Dean Howson, "tends to show us how much his happiness was increased by the presence of his friends, and what a reserve of true religious force resided for him in the mere fact of companionship. Some are too ready to throw upon others the work which they ought to do themselves; but he increased in zeal and activity when he could obtain others to help him."

Paul's dearest friend was this young Timothy, who became to him as his own beloved son. We shall hear about Timothy next week. It was at Lystra that Paul met him. No cloud ever came upon their relationship. Paul sent him to and fro as his own other self.

The fourth great friendship of the apostle was with his biographer, the evangelist Luke. This man, who was so much to Paul, and to whom we owe so much of our knowledge both of Paul and Paul's Lord, is named only three times in the Bible. He joined Paul at Troas on his second missionary journey, and while he remained at Philippi for seven years and doubtless had much to do with the fine spirit of that church and its loyalty to Paul, he rejoined his friend when he came to Philippi at the end of his third missionary journey, and after that was his almost constant companion.

These four were only a few of the men and women whom Paul loved and who loved him as friend loves friend. We know the names of many besides—Apollos, Titus, Aquila and Priscilla, Lydia, Phœbe, Aristarchus, Mark, Onesimus.—Condensed from Paul, the All-Round Man, by Robert E. Speer.

Your Friends

Have you friends? Are your friends all worth-while friends?

"Friends are like melons. Shall I tell you why?
To find one good you must a hundred try."

Have you tried your friend? What is your proof that he is a good friend?

You have different sorts of friends, of course. Have you a friend with whom you always have a good time, no matter what the circumstances? Can you say this of all friends? Why is there this difference?

Have you a friend to whom you always go for comfort when things go wrong with you? Why?

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend." What does that mean? Who, according to that, is your most faithful friend?

If you hold a piece of ribbon grass in your hand and rub it one way you find it as smooth as a piece of satin, but if you rub it the other way it is full of little prickers. So our friends "rub" us the right way or the wrong way. Have you not known how easy it is in the companionship of some friends to show only your good qualities, while in the companionship of others you are strangely tempted to be perverse and uncomfortable, if not worse? For most people there are certain friends in whose company only noble thoughts arise. The friend who makes you desire and determine to live nobly is your best friend.

Have you consciously tried to be the friend who calls out only another's good qualities, who helps him to do and to be the best that it is possible for him to be and to do?

Sentence Sermons

Religion may be tested by various virtues, but it may be safely said that its surest proof is kindness.—Ian MacLaren.

Always follow after that which is good, one toward another.—Paul.

I would rather have a good friend than all other objects of ambition put together. —Socrates.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson

For the Lesson about Paul's Last Message. 1. Who was Timothy? 2. What is said about him in The Acts and in Paul's letters? (See Subject-Index of your Bible.) 3. Read all the Second Epistle to Timothy. 4. What did Paul mean by being urgent in season, out of season? 5. What did he mean by the crown of righteousness laid up for him? 6. What do you think of the success of Paul's life?

For the Christmas Lesson. 1. Where is Bethlehem? 2. About how far is it from Nazareth, where Mary and Joseph were living before the census-taking? 3. What king was a native of Bethlehem? 4. How should Christmas be celebrated?

PAUL'S LAST MESSAGE

GOLDEN TEXT: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4.7

LESSON 2 Timothy 4.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 98

2 TIMOTHY 4 I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. 5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry. 6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

16 At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their account. 17 But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[For the Christmas Lesson see page 441]

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

1. PAUL EXHORTS TIMOTHY TO PREACH THE WORD, verses 1-4. "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom": thus solemnly Paul begins his appeal to Timothy. "It has all the seriousness of a last farewell, and it is made even more solemn by the phrases with which it is introduced, as the apostle charges Timothy 'in the sight of God' and also 'of Christ Jesus,' of whose unseen presence both Paul and Timothy are conscious, to whom both must give account in the great day when he comes to 'judge the living and the dead'" (C. R. Erdman).

A Youth Reading a Papyrus Roll

And what was the charge? "To preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." "By being urgent in season, out of season, Paul does not mean that the messenger, in the urgency of his appeal, is to be inconsiderate and tactless, but he is not to consult merely his own convenience, not to preach at set times only, not to await occasions that are obviously opportune. At every possible season he must be eager to present the Word of life" (C. R. Erdman). "Not out of season to other people, but out of season to yourself, when it is an inconvenience to you" (Charles Brown). "Take opportunity, or make it."

"Have you ever talked to the clerk at the next desk, to the assistant at the same counter, to the mate at the same bench? While you have been working together have you ever put in a good word for Jesus Christ? Make the place of your daily toil the scene of your Christian service" (J. D. Jones).

For the time is coming, Paul told Timothy, when the people will not give heed to sound doctrine, but in their curiosity will seek teachers after their own desires, turning away from the truth unto fables.

"This was the harvest reaped in the large communities over which the Church of Rome came to exercise dominion. When the Scriptures were neglected in the worship and preaching of the Church, the people read instead fabulous stories of the life and exploits of the saints. The number of these miraculous legends grew with the desire for them, till the great historic facts of Christianity were thrust into the background" (J. P. Lilley).

II. SPECIAL COUNSEL TO TIMOTHY, verses 5, 6. "But do you, Timothy, be sober-minded in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge the duties of your ministry, for you must take my place, I am about to leave you, my martyrdom is close at hand."

"God be thanked that the dead have left still
Good undone for the living to do—
Still some aim for the heart and the will
And the soul of a man to pursue" (Owen Meredith).

"The time of my departure is come." "The word Paul used means literally 'my unmooring.' Paul compared himself to a ship on the stocks being made by hammer and saw, painfully and toilsomely fashioned into the right shape. But some glad day the underpinning would be knocked away, and he would slip into the happy new element for which God all along has been preparing him" (G. B. F. Hallock).

"For the Christian, the last experience is not that of a dismasted vessel, just making the harbor; but of a bark, with all sails set, fretting at the anchor, and waiting to be set free. Surely this was Tennyson's thought when he gave us his well-known sonnet on Crossing the Bar. 'Let there be no moaning at the Bar, when I put out to sea'" (F. B. Meyer).

"It was a noble end, certainly. Men lose their hope and trust as they grow old. Here was a man who kept them all fresh to the last. Men cease to have strong convictions and grow cynical or careless. Here was a man who believed more and not less as he knew more of God, and of himself, and of the world. We are sure that his was the old age God loves to see. To such men as Paul alone is God's promise to David fulfilled: 'With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation'" (Phillips Brooks).

The day that Von Moltke was eighty years old he wrote to a friend: "I stand near the end of my life's course. And what a wholly different measuring-rod will be used upon our earthly careers in the future world from that used in this! The value of a human life will be determined, not by the glory of success, but by the purity of motive and the faithful perseverance in one's duty, even where the events have seemed of little consequence. What a wonderful re-arrangement of the high and the low will take place at the great review!"

III. PAUL REVIEWS HIS LIFE AND FACES THE FUTURE, verses 7, 8. Then with great joy the apostle exclaimed as he reviewed his own life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." "I have contested earnestly in the good contest"—for it is the athlete that the apostle has in mind; like a runner in the games "I have finished the course" (see 1 Cor. 9.24; Acts 20.24); as contestants keep the rules of the game so I have kept the rules of life's course, I have trusted in God, "I have kept the faith."

I have fought the good fight.

"Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single has maintained
'Gainst revolted multitudes the cause
Of Truth—in word mightier than they in arms" (Milton).

I have finished the course. "What is the course? Let me give another word. What is a racer? Not a man who runs any way, but a man who runs over a marked-out track. And Paul says, 'I have kept the track.' He found the track. He followed the light. And when you and I come to be where Paul was when this letter was written, there will be only one question that will be worth asking,

'Have I kept the track? Have I followed God's light for me?'" (Charles Brown).

I have kept the faith. "Paul is here stating that he had received the gospel as a sacred deposit, he had guarded it with ceaseless care, and now he is entrusting it to Timothy, who is thus encouraged not only to fight manfully and to run eagerly, but also, as the figure of speech changes to one which Paul had used earlier in the letter, to guard 'that good word which was committed' to him" (C. R. Erdman).

And then, looking into the future, Paul jubilantly wrote:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge (perhaps Paul is thinking of Nero, the unrighteous judge), shall give to me at that day." "The crown of righteousness, in plain words, is that kind and measure of bliss which the wrestler in righteousness alone is either entitled to or prepared to enjoy" (Fairbairn).

"We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.
The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown" (Whittier).

"And not to me only," Paul added, "but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

IV. PERSONAL MATTERS, verses 9-18. An appeal to Timothy to come to him with Mark, and a sad story of the scattering of many friends follow. "Though all forsook me at my first defense—may it not be charged against them—the Lord was with me and strengthened me, in order that the message might be fully proclaimed by me and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of 'the lion's mouth.'" By the expression "delivered out of the lion's mouth" (a quotation from Ps. 22.21) Paul may have meant deliverance from Nero, or from the lions in the amphitheater, or from his Jewish accusers, or from the jaws of death. "It is a plausible conjecture of Conybeare and Howson that the first hearing, on which he was acquitted and 'delivered out of the lion's mouth,' was on the charge of complicity and sympathy with the incendiaries who had burned Rome in 64; and that charge was triumphantly disproved. The second and fatal charge, heard later (see The Historical Background) was doubtless that of treason, shown by hostility to the established customs of society and by weakening the Imperial authority" (Wm. E. Ramsay).

"The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom," Paul writes triumphantly.

"Paul does not believe that no physical ill can befall him, but he is confident that his enemies can inflict no abiding harm. His description of deliverance widens out to the statement of a sublime Christian confidence. Nothing can permanently injure one who belongs to Christ; even death can only deliver him from suffering and bring him into eternal bliss. No wonder that in the presence of such a Lord, Paul adds this doxology: 'To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen'" (C. R. Erdman).

"One who has never seen a ship could know nothing of the Oceanic as she lay, a great hulk, along the dock at Liverpool. But when the last passenger and the last letter was on board, and the word rang from the bridge, 'Loose the shore rope,' and the vessel began to move away, and when she reached the sea, then could we see for what the Oceanic was made. She was not made to hug the shore; she was made for the mighty deep. There must be a loosing before she could be in her element. Paul knew that presently beyond the land of shadow and darkness that men call death, after he had been loosed from his moorings and reached the great eternal sea of life, he would realize that for which he had been created" (G. Campbell Morgan).

The work that Jesus began both to do and to teach we have seen magnificently carried on by his great apostle Paul, and now we leave him in prison in his old age, but not creeping into port, a wreck with broken masts and rudder gone, but full sail still, and strong for other voyages in other seas, as Phillips Brooks beautifully expresses our thought.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

I am already being offered, verse 6. The margin of the Revised Version gives this literal rendering of the Greek, "I am already poured out as a drink-offering." When the meal-offering was presented on the altar, there was also a drink-offering of wine "poured out unto Jehovah" (Num. 28.7). Paul's whole life had been a sacrifice offered to God, and now his martyrdom is so near that he speaks of the shedding of his blood as a drink-offering already being offered.

A Crown Presented to Peter and Paul. From the bottom of a glass cup found in the Catacombs at Rome.

I have finished the course. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, verses 7, 8. The Greek youth who won the prize in the race at the Olympian games entered his native city on his return through a breach made for him in its walls, which was then closed that no one less worthy should tread in his footsteps. His statue might be erected in the sacred grove of Olympia and poets might sing his praises, but the prize for which he contended, his dearest possession, was a crown of olive branches. Paul evidently had the Grecian games in mind when he wrote these words.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson

What are some of the things which Paul endured while fighting his good fight? What words of Stephen are recalled by the last clause of verse 16?

The Fate of Paul

From Philemon 22, we know that Paul was expecting a speedy release, and it is generally believed that his expectation was realized. Professor Ramsay believes that Paul was detained at Rome to await the coming of his persecutors to testify against him. The trial could not begin until there was an accuser to state the ground of complaint. The Palestinian Jews failed to come, for they knew their case was too weak to be put forward in a Roman Court. Two successive Roman governors of Palestine had said Paul was guiltless. Their non-appearance kept Paul imprisoned the "two years." The law presumed the accused innocent after eighteen months. (This was later the law, and Professor Ramsay argues plausibly that it was a law enacted some years before Paul's time by the Emperor Claudius.) The space of two years is equivalent to the legal term of eighteen months, together with additional time required for the formalities of release. There was, therefore, no proper "first trial," but only an acquittal in default.

Tradition says that after his release Paul visited Spain. From 1 Timothy and Titus (believed to have been written later than the first imprisonment), we learn that he went to Greece, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia, passing through Troas, and that he intended spending the winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. In July, 64, the greater part of Rome was burned over, and Nero, to avert suspicion from himself, accused the Christians of having set the fire. Multitudes of Christians were put to death after horrible tortures, many of them being burnt as torches in the emperor's garden on the Vatican hill.

By the middle of June, A. D. 68, Nero had died in disgrace, and tradition says that before then Paul met his fate. Even tradition supplies only a few details, to the effect that he was beheaded on the Ostian Road, three miles from the city, and a matron named Lucina, who lived beside this road, buried his body on her own land.

The Tullianum, the lower part of the Mamertine Prison in Rome, is the traditional place where Paul was confined before his execution. It is an underground space twenty feet in diameter, which was reached through a manhole at the top. The ruins of the Prison of the Prætorian Guards are also shown to visitors as the place of Paul's second imprisonment.

The Pastoral Epistles

See our Introduction.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PAUL'S VICTORIOUS FAITH

Beginning the Lesson

When Cæsar Augustus, the great Roman Emperor, was dying, he called for a mirror, and after gazing at himself and smoothing his hair he said to those about him: "Have I played my part well? If so, applaud me."

What a contrast between the last thoughts that filled his mind and the last thoughts of Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, when the time of his departure was come!

We study today the last written message of Paul that has come down to us, written to Timothy, one of his outstanding friends. Very tender was the affection between the two, as evidenced by Paul's words in the first chapter of our Epistle: "I thank God . . . how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy." Timothy was to be Paul's successor, on Timothy Paul hoped his mantle would fall. It is a solemn charge which he gives him. (Follow with Explanations and Comments.)

Investing a Life

Fred B. Smith, the Men and Religion leader, was called to the bedside of a dying friend. The friend grasped his hand. "Smith," said he, "I want to thank you for inducing me to put a big investment into religion. It was the best thing I ever did." And Smith, telling the story to a group of men, asks: "Do you ever stop to think, men, how you are investing your lives? Are you living big?"

The question may with profit engage us all. How are we investing our lives? Are we investing our strength, our love, our learning, our time, our talents, our tact, our patience, our courage—everything that we have—in efforts that will hasten the coming of God's Kingdom? One of the world's great men, who had thus invested his life, was able to say as his closing days neared: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." Paul knew that he had invested well. Timothy did not have to read between the lines when he received that epistle.—Zion's Herald.

The Militant Life

There is no life of faith, no life of holiness and service, possible without effort and struggle. Genuine goodness is never soft; it is always forceful, energetic, militant. "So fight I," says the apostle—and here apparently he takes his illustration from the boxing ring, "as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and bring it into subjection." "So run I," he says again, "as not uncertainly,"—and here the figure is changed to that of the runner pressing with panting breath and every muscle strained to the goal. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil days," he says in yet another place, where the figure is that of the soldier issuing forth to face the dust and heat of battle. "Exercise thyself," says the Apostle, or, if I may transliterate the Greek and coin a word in the process, "Gymnastize thyself into godliness," as if to say, "Godliness is no easy thing; you have to train and to strip for it."

Genuine goodness is positive, energetic, athletic, and to be genuinely good a man must put on strength and courage. There is a significant word in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. He is giving a list of the people who cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. It is a terrible list, and midway through it he mentions the "effeminate." And who are the "effeminate"? They are the "soft." (The word is exactly the same word as that used in the phrase, "soft raiment.") The "soft," the weak, the flabby, the limp shall not inherit the Kingdom, says St. Paul. No! because the Kingdom only belongs to the good, and goodness is never "soft"; goodness, of necessity, is energetic, athletic, militant. The good man to be a good man must have granite in him.—Condensed from an address by J. D. Jones.

The Militant Faith

I wonder if you remember the story that Carlyle tells about the dying of Oliver Cromwell. If ever there was a big man and a strong man in the place of ruler in Britain, it was Oliver. His chaplain had been reading to him, and amongst other sentences he had read this: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth

me,"—all things, even die triumphantly. It was a great word, and the Protector for a time stumbled at it. And in a moment he was heard saying to himself: "Paul's Christ is my Christ. What Christ would help Paul to do, he would help me to do." And he faced that last fight and won it by the grace of Jesus Christ.—J. D. Jones, in The Record of Christian Work.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

The eternal struggle between right and wrong is going on everywhere, in every workshop and every market-place, in our homes and in our hearts. Sometimes it looks as though the good cause were going to be beaten, as though selfishness really did pay in the end. But a faithful soldier knows that in this endless conflict between light and darkness God Almighty himself is on the side of right, and so the right side must be the winning side at last.

Fight the good fight. Why is it called good? That word *good* properly means gallant, noble, glorious, the fight which it is worth a man's life not to miss. Christ makes us understand that to fight this battle with him is the finest and most glorious thing in the world—the one thing worth living for.—The Bible in the World.

The Life that Satisfies God

What is life worth? How measure it? I say
Life is what life can compass,—not mere length
Of days, but what is packed into each day,
Best use and largest increment of time and strength.

This is God's just appraisement,—how we make,
Or fail to make, life equal to its chance
Of good; what heaven's heritage we take,
What perfectness achieve, in view of circumstance.

To make life all it has in it to be—
Just that, its measure, rounded full and fair,—
Reveals the statue hid in you and me,
And satisfies the Master's heart who placed it there.—James Buckham.

When the Time of Departure Comes

No man can predict the hour of his death. That it is coming is sure, but when it will arrive he does not know. Yet there are certain signs and omens which bring him face to face with it.

Old age which has its limits: a disease for which the doctors know no remedy: a decree of the court (as in Paul's case) against which there is no appeal.

How shall we meet this stark fact? How shall we behave in this inexorable presence?

Well, beloved, it seems to me that we must behave just as we have behaved in all the other crises of life—any one of which might have been final. If we have gone through calamity and sickness and pain and separation without flinching, why should we not go through this last door?

If I knew that I had to die next week, I should try to finish my work and put all affairs in order, to say a cheerful good-bye to those who love me, and then to slip out quietly on the new voyage trusting absolutely and only in our divine pilot, Jesus Christ.—Henry van Dyke, in Light My Candle.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. The satisfaction of a well-spent life.

2. The ideal missionary. See Portrait of a Possible Missionary in The Christian Century for November 18, 1926.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOAL

Beginning the Lesson

To start thee on thy outrunning race,
Christ shows the splendor of his face:
What will that face of splendor be
When at the goal he welcomes thee?

Thus Christina Rossetti sings of Paul. To what does she refer in the first two lines of her stanza? Now Paul the aged, as he called himself in our last lesson, is anticipating the welcome that awaits him at the goal. What does he say about the life he has lived? (Continue with Explanations and Comments.)

Nearing the Goal

It is a beautiful picture his letter gives us of this great hero quietly awaiting his end, nobly conscious that his life had been well lived, his work well done, and calmly certain that he will soon be with Christ, which is far better.

In a great drama Cardinal Richelieu is asked, "Art thou Richelieu?" and he replies, "Yesterday I was Richelieu; today I am a poor old man; tomorrow I know not what." Paul might have been asked, "Art thou Paul?" and he might have replied, "Yesterday I was Paul, the active worker; today I am Paul, the aged man awaiting his summons; tomorrow I shall have won my crown."

Tomorrow came. Paul was led by Roman soldiers out through the Ostian Gate to the place of his execution. On the way, so tradition says, he saw Plautilla, the daughter of Flavius Savinus, weeping bitterly, and to her he said, "Plautilla, weep not, and give me a veil wherewith to bind my eyes, for I am going to see my Lord." She gave him the veil, and the procession moved on. They halted. The sword was uplifted and fell. Paul saw his Lord. For him to live was Christ—to die was gain.

What Is the Christian's Goal?

"Hitch your wagon to a star," said Emerson. He meant by that that one should not be content with a low aim in life, but should aim high. A Christian's aim, or goal, should be like Paul's whose burning desire was to grow "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," as we read in his letter to the Ephesians. Paul had no other ambitions than to be "the kind of man that God had in his mind when God called him to be the servant of his Son. The goal of all his efforts is the winning of the prize of a character like unto the character of Christ."

We have but One Life

A vessel was once far out on the ocean when a great storm arose; the waves dashed over the decks and the ship began to sink. The night was dark, but the sailors succeeded in launching their boats and rowing away before the vessel sank. They were in despair until they suddenly saw the light of a distant ship, but how could they make the men on the ship see them in the darkness? They searched the boat and found an old lantern with an inch of candle in it. Then they tried to find a match: every man felt in all his pockets, but not a match was to be found. The captain told them to search again: every sailor turned his pockets inside out, and at last one precious match was found. The man who found it passed it to the captain, while all clustered about holding out their jackets to keep off the wind when the captain should light the lantern. It was a moment of great anxiety. What if the wind should blow out the match! The captain trembled and hardly dared to strike, but he must do it, and so at last amidst breathless excitement he carefully struck the match. It burned brightly and he held it to the candle, when to the great joy of the ship-wrecked marines the candle gave out a glowing light. They waved the lantern till the ship saw the signal and came to them.

What was it that made the one match so precious? It was their only match, their one chance. It is that which gives value to our lives. We have but one, and if we spend it wrongly we cannot try again. Let us try to live right the only time.—Herbert W. Lathe, in The Junior Parish.

Choose the High Way

To every man there openeth
A way and ways and a way.
And the high souls choose the high way,
And the low souls take the low,
And in between on the misty flats
The rest drift to and fro.
So to every soul there openeth
The high way and the low,
And every man decideth
Which way his soul shall go.—John Oxenham.

Sentence Sermons

There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below.—Spurgeon.

Let him not boast who puts his armor on,
As he who puts it off, the battle won.—Longfellow.

If you are to have a good tomorrow you must lay the right foundation today.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: There is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2.11

LESSON Luke 2.1-20

DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 11.1-9

LUKE 2.8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTS

I. THE BIRTH OF JESUS AT BETHLEHEM, verses 1-7. When Cæsar ordered the enrollment of every one in the Roman Empire, the people of Palestine went each to "his own city" to be enrolled. Bethlehem had been the home of David, their ancestor, and therefore Mary and Joseph went from Nazareth of Galilee, where they were living, to Bethlehem to be enrolled. There Jesus was born, and Mary laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"Look at the Christ-Child in the manger! See how he transcended physical environment. He was born of a peasant family and of a hated, provincial, bigoted race, but he brought a redemptive life to all the world. He was all his life confined to a province, but his love knew no bounds; it belted the earth. He was practically uneducated; unversed in poetry; untrained in artistic appreciation; unfamiliar with architecture; strange to literature. Yet it was he who brought the truth that set men free; who today dominates the best poetry; inspires the greatest architecture; gives soul to the loftiest literature. America today rapidly becoming the centrifugal force in the world finance, almost completely absorbed in pecuniary pursuits, needs to look at the manger and see that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth'" (Carl Knudsen).

II. THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS, verses 8-14. "Be not afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people," were the angels' glad words heard by shepherds who were watching their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem on the night of the day that Jesus was born.

"Here we have God's choicest announcement coming to the hearts of simple herdsmen. In looking for men on whom the honor should fall, in testing the worthiness of souls to hear the wonderful news, God skipped the direct descendants of Abraham, the President of the First National Bank of Jerusalem, the Mayor of Bethlehem, or the High Priest of Herod's Court. He paid no attention to the leaders on the income-tax reports, to the blue bloods, or to the royalty. In God's view, a man's worth is not his social grace or his vocation. To God, the greatest asset is a soul sensitized to moral appeal, a character transparently clean and humbly submissive to the divine will" (Carl Knudsen).

And this was the good tidings: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." *Christ* is the title of Jesus as the One consecrated to be the Redeemer of the world, for it means *The Annointed One.*

"A little Boy of heavenly birth,
But far from home today,
Comes down to find his ball, the earth,
That sin has cast away.
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get him back his ball" (Father Tabb).

"And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger," the angelic host explained. The 'sign' was in the unexpected circumstance of the Babe's being cradled in a manger. The swaddling clothes were the bands of cloth which the eastern mother wraps tightly around the body of her babe, confining legs and arms.

Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared praising God by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." The last part of this song always seems strange to us who are accustomed to the words of the Authorized Version, "good will to men." The different translations are due to the fact that in some manuscripts the Greek word is *eudokia* (good will), nominative case, while in other manuscripts the word is *eudokias,* genitive case, (of good will). The revisers decided that the latter was the better version; and accordingly the English Revised translation reads, "among men of good will." To show more clearly that it is God's good will, not man's—for the phrase is a Hebraism meaning men to whom God is favorable—the American Revised translation reads, "among men in whom he is well pleased."

The secret of the true Christmas spirit is in forgetting self and finding happiness in others' joy. It is the spirit of the heavenly host: their own personalities are in the background as they sing their tiddings of great joy to the world.

"For somehow, not only for Christmas, but all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you."

III. THE SHEPHERDS VISIT THE BABE, verses 15-20. The shepherds had been dumb with amazement while the vision lasted, and then they said one to another, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." They came to Bethlehem in haste, and finding Mary and Joseph and the Babe in the manger, they told them what they had heard about the Child. All wondered at the words, and Mary kept pondering upon them. The shepherds returned to their humble task with an outburst of praise upon their lips.

"There will come times to each of us in the midst of our daily drudgery, when some messenger sent by God will call us to draw closer to him. It may be a strain of music, or some wretched human brother who needs our love and help, or some moment of physical weakness, when life's burdens seem almost too great to bear, and we are tired and lonely and cry for rest that only God can give. It is a messenger, calling us away from the work of money getting, or from domestic duties, to our Master's side. It is as certainly a divine summons as that which came to the shepherds. See, then, that ye disobey not the heavenly call" (The Youth's Companion).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

All went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city. In Syria and Palestine a moderate-sized village often has among its inhabitants one or more who are called strangers or sojourners. These may have not only spent their own lifetime there, but may belong to the second or third generation of those who have done so; but the name applies to them because they are still registered and liable to taxation in their ancestral village where a peasant cottage or vineyard connects them with the locality and entitles them to citizenship.—George M. Mackie.

She laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn, verse 7. We should not think of a manger in a stable, but of a box projecting from the inside wall of a house in which chopped straw or barley is put for the animals to eat, for in the time of Christ the poor peasants had but one enclosure for themselves and their animals. The part of the house where the family lived had a raised flooring, while the animals stood on the ground below and at one side of this elevated space.

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A WOMAN OF BETHLEHEM

Animals are housed with the family in some peasant abodes in Palestine today, and having seen such a house with its manger, I think of Jesus and his mother, not as homeless wanderers, but as sharing the shelter of a friendly peasant's house.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Where and When Jesus Was Born

From their home in Nazareth of Galilee Mary and Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem, to be enrolled in the census, for that was their ancestral city. The cities are seventy-two miles apart, and it must have taken them several days to make the journey. There in Bethlehem Jesus was born. There are caves in the limestone rocks of Bethlehem which were sometimes used as stables, and the Church of the Nativity is built over the cave which tradition calls the one in which Jesus was born. The church was built in the fourth century by Helena, mother of Constantine the Great.

"The providence of God has prevented an idolatry of place and time," Bishop Edwin H. Hughes thinks. "Perhaps the star in the floor of the cave, shown by Bethlehem guides, marks the actual spot of Christ's birth, but no one can be dogmatic about that. Long ago, too, an exuberant clergyman declared that God selected the rather bleak December as the time of the Nativity, because he wished to throw a great light over a forbidding month! But even here God kept his own secret of the calendar. The Church has fixed a day and calls it Christmas. It is well. Yet the Lord allows us not to make a date a fetish. Christmas really belongs in the timeless almanac, even as it belongs in the placeless geography. It was ordained that the emphasis should be on the spirit. Place and time remain a glorious uncertainty; the fact abides in glorious certainty!"

A SUGGESTION TO TEACHERS

Our modern celebration of Christmas has much to disturb us. By its emphasis on gift giving, the day seems to be commercialized. Let the Church-school teacher take this opportunity to stress the deep and beautiful religious meaning of the day, the significance of God's great gift to the world.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE INCARNATION

Beginning the Lesson

"When God wants to do anything he prepares for it by sending a baby into the world. The doom of slavery in America was sealed when Abraham Lincoln drew his first breath in that old Kentucky cabin. The darkness of Africa was doomed to break when a baby was born into a Scottish home at Blantyre, and they named him David Livingstone. 'When there is a wrong to be righted, or a work to be done, or a truth to be preached, God sends a baby into the world. That is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem.' "

What the Incarnation Means

God was in this world before the Incarnation, ruling in wisdom and love. But the world did not know him. The light shone in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not. Then in one gleaming flash, the light broke upon the world's darkness as when, on some still summer night, the lightning fills the sky with its broad, swift blaze. "Round the cape of a sudden comes the sun." There it is—there it glows; at a glance we have taken it all in. In one event the light breaks upon the world. Christ is born. Heaven breaks into song. The night shivers over the wondering shepherds. Men tingle to the last drop of blood over the splendor of the new Reality; the earth throbs with a new joy, and every fiber of human nature quivers under the thrill. The King has come to his palace gate and men look upon his face. That is what the Incarnation means—God's answer to man's imperious cry: "Let us see the King."—John F. Carson.

The Great Fact of the Incarnation

In all our thinking about Christmas we must not forget to think of him through whom it has all come; in all our cherishing of fond memories we must not fail to remember what he has done for and been to the world. We have our differing ways of thinking of Jesus, and of interpreting the great mystery of his life and death, and

yet there are, after all, some great fundamental facts about him in which we all agree. His coming, no matter how we may interpret or understand it, has been the great event in the history of the world, and has made more difference than all the things that have happened since the beginning of time. With all its tragedy, life has had new hope and gladness and joy since he came; with all its mystery and darkness, there was a glorious light shed upon its way with his birth and appearing. That is the glorious fact, the full satisfaction of the contemplation of which we ought not to miss.

And in our thinking of him at the Christmas time let us not harass ourselves too much with thoughts of the mystery and the difficulty of the story of his coming. Here, also, the great facts far outweigh the mysteries and the difficulties. Ought we not to rejoice in these and get from them the full gladness and comfort and refreshing that they are intended to give?

"I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the Manger Child
Has brought God's life to me."

That is a fact great enough and wonderful enough to fill every mouth with singing and every heart with a fullness of joy.—The New Outlook.

The Purpose of the Incarnation

Great thinkers like Doctor Arnold and Charles Kingsley have confessed that they could only comprehend God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Henry Ward Beecher said that when he tried to think of God without thinking of Christ there went up in his mind "a vague mental mist." It was to clear away such a mist and show us how we may realize the fact and the power of God that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men.

Guido Reni's painting of the "Aurora" frescoed on the ceiling of the Vatican at Rome and the mirror on the table underneath, into which one may look without effort and study there the wonderful fresco, are familiar to all. So Jesus mirrored the Father for all the world to see. "In this life," writes the Editor of the Sunday School Chronicle, "we can go no farther than the child who asked if it were possible for him to see God and who replied, when told he could not, 'Then I shall be satisfied with Jesus Christ.' We must all be satisfied with Christ, who is the highest expression of God known to man. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'"

The Dynamic of the Incarnation

During the early centuries of Christianity tremendous battles were waged over intellectual conceptions of the Incarnation, and these old, persistent, divisive battle-cries are not yet silenced. Should we not do well to remember Paul's declaration that even though he had known Christ after the flesh, he knew him no more? For it was not the Jesus of the flesh whom Paul knew, but the Christ of the spirit; and hence in his Epistles he says no word about the earthly birth of Christ, but a great deal about a Christ born again in the hearts of men by love and faith. Here is the real dynamic of the Incarnation. As a spiritual fact its efficacy is attested by millions of human lives which have been wholly transformed by the belief that in the Christ was the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And so I say, Don't think of the Incarnation as a difficult and unintelligible dogma of churchmen and theologians; grasp it as a living fact which concerns yourself. We come to Bethlehem not to speculate on the mystery and method of the divine Incarnation, but to worship as the Magi did, and present our gifts of loyalty and love. The mystery we cannot fathom; but it is enough if from our hearts we call him Lord, and submit our lives to his strong and gentle rule.—W. J. Dawson.

Christmas Day

Christmas is not a day on which we are called to celebrate a dead Jesus, but one which speaks to us of life and calls us to come face to face with a Friend, who is waiting to talk with us, to help us, to set us free, and to give us the light we need to face the darkness round about us.—T. R. Glover.

A Christmas Wish

That love may light the eyes of them
Who keep the season of his birth,

Till to the starry hosts, our earth
Shall be the Star of Bethlehem.—Edward Eyre Hunt.

For Bible Class Discussion

1. Should little children be led to believe in Santa Claus? If so, how and how soon should they be enlightened as to the givers of their Christmas gifts?

2. The true Christmas spirit.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

HOW TO OBSERVE CHRISTMAS

Beginning the Lesson

In the poem entitled The Inn That Missed Its Chance, the time is after the Babe, who was laid in a manger because there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn at Bethlehem, had become known as the Christ, the Son of God. The Landlord of that inn is speaking, and excusing himself for not having received him:

"What could be done? The inn was full of folks.
His Honor, Marcus Lucius, and his scribes
Who made the census; honorable men
From farthest Galilee, come hitherward
To be enrolled; high ladies and their lords;
The rich, the rabbis, such a noble throng
As Bethlehem had never seen before,
And may not see again. And there they were
Close herded with their servants, till the Inn
Was like a hive at swarming time and I
Was fairly crazed among them.

"Could I know
That *they* were so *important? Just the two,*
No servants, just a workman sort of man,
Leading a donkey, and his wife thereon
Drooping and pale,—I saw them not myself,
My servants must have driven them away;—
But had I seen them,—how was I to know!
Were Inns to welcome stragglers up and down
In all our towns from Beersheba to Dan,
Till he should come? and how were men to know?
There was a sign, they say, a heavenly light
Resplendent; but I had no time for stars.
And there were songs of angels in the air
Out on the hills; but how was I to hear
Amid the thousand clamors of an Inn?"

Who will tell the beautiful story about the message that came to shepherds at this time?

The First Christmas and This Christmas

Mother had just told the wonderful Christmas story of Bethlehem, as she always did at the end of Christmas Day, when Stewart said, "Christmas Day now is not much like the first Christmas, is it?"

"There are many things that are like the first Christmas," the mother returned. "Here is one. We put lights on the Christmas tree to remind us of what?"

"The light of the Christmas star!" answered Stewart. "I never thought of that before!"

"Yes, and you know the Babe of Bethlehem was often called 'The Light of the World,' so the Christmas candles have more than one beautiful meaning, you see. Can you think of anything else?"

"Well," said Katherine, "we give presents to each other on that day. Is it because the Wise Men brought gifts?"

"Yes. Also, the Babe of Bethlehem was a great Gift to the world. So on that day we give gifts, too."

"Mother," said Katherine suddenly, "we can take something from Christmas Day right through the year with us, can't we? Not toys and games, for they do get broken, but Christmas—"

She was interrupted by the others as they cried in concert, "Christmas Love! Christmas Peace! Christmas Joy!"—Condensed from The Story Paper.

Celebrating Christmas with Zeal

The oldest Christmas sermon that we possess was preached by Chrysostom at Antioch on the twenty-fifth of December, 386 A. D. How long ago was that? "It is not yet ten days since this day was wholly unknown to us," he says, "but you celebrate it with as much zeal as if it had been known since time inmemorial!"

And we, too, in our day, celebrate Christmas with the greatest possible zeal. But in those early days there was zeal in recalling God's great Gift, the fact that "unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord," while today the zeal is often so wholly expended upon the giving and receiving of gifts that the Great Gift is lost sight of.

It is right that Christmas should be a time of joy and merriment, it is right to remember our friends with thoughtful gifts on that day, but there are other ways also in which the day should be observed. What are they?

The True Christmas Spirit

In our lesson about the coming of the Ephesian elders to Miletus to bid Paul farewell, we heard Paul counsel them to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. At Christmas time we learn not only that there is blessedness in giving but that blessedness lies in the spirit that prompts the giving. We are happier at the Christmas season than at other times because we are filled with the Christmas spirit.

You remember how in Dickens' Christmas Carol Old Scrooge asks, "What's Christmas?" for he thought of it only as a time for paying bills and a time for finding himself a year older, and he could see no reason for keeping the Day. His nephew, who came in to wish him a Merry Christmas, had very different thoughts about it: "I have always thought of Christmas-time when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving charitable time; the only time I know of in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely; I believe it has done me good and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

When the Christmas spirit finally took possession of the miserly heart of Scrooge, he resolved that he would "honor Christmas in his heart and try to keep it all the year," and you recall how he surprised his ill-paid clerk, Bob Cratchit, with the gift of a big turkey and an increased salary. A writer in The Atlantic calls Dickens' Christmas Carol "The greatest little book in the world" because the reading of it makes everyone want "to make the world a little better," as Stevenson said it made him. "I feel so good after reading it," Stevenson said, "and shall do everything to make the world a little better. I shall give money: not that I haven't done so always, but I shall give now with a high hand."

Washington Irving has called Christmas the season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling, not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart. Our Christmas spirit must reach out to the poor and the sick and the lonely, as well as to our friends.

"How shall we celebrate today—
A Merry Christmas, shall we say?
Best wishes for the coming year—
What can we say he'd like to hear?

"We'll tell him that we'll share our joy
With poorer friends, some girl or boy—
'Twill please him most this Christmas day,
For he, too, slept upon the hay.

"We'll give to him our heart and soul,
And place our name upon the scroll—
And then our lips with truth can sing
All hail the birthday of our King!"

Sentence Sermon

A Merry Christmas to everybody!
A Happy New Year to all the world!—Dickens.

REVIEW: PAUL, THE WORLD CHRISTIAN

GOLDEN TEXT: For me to live is Christ. Philippians 1.21

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 103.1-5, 8-13

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

Read a quotation and let all pupils who recognize the allusion signify this. Then ask one of them to tell the lesson to which the allusion refers, or ask the other pupils questions in regard to it.

If we would see the Word of God grow mightily and prevail in our own city, we must serve the Lord with lowliness of mind and sincerity and sacrificial earnestness.—G. Campbell Morgan.

"For her, three noisy hours of fierce acclaim
When shook the theater with craftsmen's cheers;
For him her worshipers maligned, a name
That claims the clamors of the endless years."

We have no right to suppose that another has done a wrong thing and then state our supposition as a fact. A large proportion of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and other places is started just as the story about Paul started.—J. R. Miller.

Let us be quite certain that in our honest ambition to understand all mysteries and all knowledge, we are not strangers to the experience of Love Divine.—C. S. Horne.

Lord Cecil bids us rejoice that humanity can still show such devotion and self-sacrifice as theirs. In contemplating this wonderful story, he adds, let us thank God and take courage.

We are in the body of Christ, but, like dislocated limbs, are useless; and before we can fulfil the great ministry which Jesus desires to fulfil by our means, we must be articulated and joined with the living Head.—F. B. Meyer.

If the mercies of God have blessedly beset us, let us not build three tabernacles that we may abide, but rather call the place where our mercies meet us Three Taverns, and then, like Paul, push on, thank God, and take courage.—Maltbie D. Babcock.

"O little ship that rocked the wave,
Bound for the Cyprian shore,
Rare hostage to the world you gave
In him whose life you bore."

In the charity that thinketh no evil, in softness of spirit and grace of life, the saints are invulnerable to irritations which grievously exasperate men of an inferior spirit.—W. L. Watkinson.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults

1. What did it cost Paul to be a follower of Christ? 2. By what method did Paul hope to create a friendly feeling between the Jewish and Gentile churches? 3. Who were Felix, Festus, and Agrippa? 4. Why did Paul persist in going to Jerusalem, and what was the result? 5. What did Paul talk to Felix about, and what was the latter's answer? 6. What was Paul's address before Agrippa? 7. What place had friendship in Paul's life? 8. What does Paul say love will not do? 9. What does Paul say love will do? 10. How may one acquire the habit of liberality? 11. How would Paul bring about peace and good will among men? 12. What price did Paul pay for his power in prayer? 13. Tell something about the great cities where Paul founded churches. 14. What does the world owe to Paul? 15. What lessons have you gained from the study of Paul's life and teachings?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Who was Paul's first helper in his missionary work? 2. Who was Paul's second great helper in his missionary work? 3. What other friends of Paul have appeared in these lessons? 4. What important cities did Paul visit on his Third Missionary

Journey? 5. What can you tell about the church Paul founded at Corinth? 6. What argument against drinking liquor can you give from Paul's letter to the Romans? 7. What connection with the life and work of Paul did each of these men have: Agrippa, Timothy, Felix, Mark, Festus? 8. What led to Paul's arrest at Jerusalem? 9. What answer did Paul make when Agrippa said to Paul that Paul wished to make him a Christian? 10. What led to Paul's being sent to Rome? 11. What spirit did Paul show on the way from Jerusalem to Rome? 12. What encouraged Paul as he was nearing Rome? 13. Mention some of the hardships of Paul's life. 14. When and how did he probably suffer martyrdom? 15. What do you admire in Paul?

QUESTIONS UPON THE PAULINE EPISTLES

1. To whom is Second Corinthians addressed? 2. What was the occasion for the letter? 3. What strong contrasts in the letter? 4. What three thoughts filled Paul's mind as he wrote? 5. What are its marked characteristics? 6. Which are its most spiritual chapters? 7. What is the greatest chapter in the First Epistle to the Corinthians? 8. Why did Paul write his letter to the Romans? 9. What is its keynote? 10. Of what does the practical part of the letter treat? 11. Which is the most eloquent chapter and what does it discuss? 12. What is the nature of the Epistle to the Ephesians? 13. What was Paul's purpose in writing it? 14. What is its character? 15. Why did Paul write to Philemon? 16. What does this little letter tell us about Paul? 17. Who was Timothy? 18. What does Paul counsel him in his first letter to Timothy? 19. In his second letter? 20. Which is the longest of Paul's letters? 21. Which is the most abstract? 22. Which are the two profoundest letters? 23. Where will you find Paul's beautiful discourse upon love? 24. What are the greatest chapters in Paul's Epistles?

THEMES FOR WRITTEN WORK

For Young People and Adults

1. The Book of The Acts.
2. The Cities of The Acts.
3. Twelve Prominent Workers in The Acts.
4. The Pauline Epistles.
5. A Discussion of the Character of Paul.
6. An Appreciation of Paul.
7. What Paul Accomplished.

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. Paul's Life-Story.
2. The Many-Sided Paul.
3. Paul as a Hero.
4. Paul as a Missionary.
5. Paul's Friends.
6. Paul's Enemies.
7. Why I Admire Paul.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults

1. What is said about God in Ex. 39.7, 8? 2. In Ps. 103.3-5, 10-14? 3. In Isa. 40.29-31? 4. What is your conception of God?

For Intermediates and Seniors

1. What does Jesus say in Mt. 6.25-30 about the Father's care? 2. What does Jesus say in John 3.24 that God is? 3. What does John say in 1 Jn. 4.8 that God is? 4. What does the Heavenly Father mean to you?

Note.

As usual, I would remind you that you can send this volume on to a missionary in the Philippines or in Korea for further usefulness, if you do not care to keep it. This course of lessons is studied in those lands throughout next year. For the address of a missionary, write to Dr. Samuel D. Price, Superintendent of the Surplus Department, World's Sunday School Association, Metropolitan Tower, New York City.

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